

Washington/Baltimore  
High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT





# Washington/Baltimore HIDTA

Serving the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia



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What is HIDTA?

The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program (HIDTA) was created by Congress with the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988. Its mission is to disrupt the market for illegal drugs in the United States by assisting federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement entities participating in the HIDTA program to dismantle and disrupt drug trafficking organizations, with particular emphasis on drug trafficking regions that have harmful effects on other parts of the United States.

Each of the 33 HIDTA programs across the country share two goals as part of the National HIDTA Program. They are:

- 1 To disrupt the market for illegal drugs by dismantling or disrupting drug trafficking and/or money laundering organizations
- 2 To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the HIDTA initiatives

In 1994, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) designated 13 jurisdictions in Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Northern Virginia as a HIDTA region. Since then, the Washington/Baltimore (W/B) HIDTA’s boundaries have expanded to include 29 counties and 15 cities in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

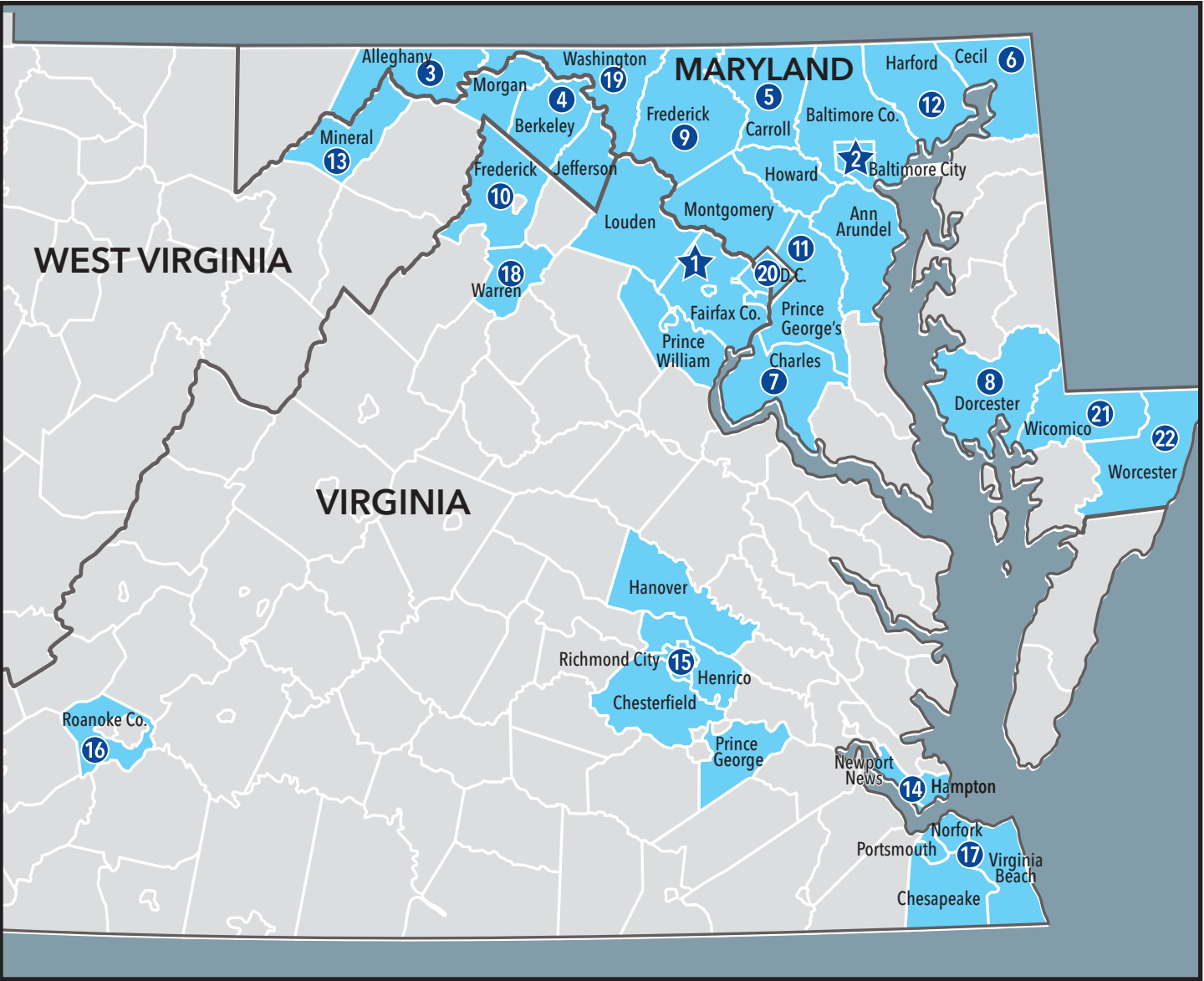
The Washington/Baltimore HIDTA Region

Though it was initially very compact, the W/B HIDTA is now widely dispersed across the region. Further, the 12,099 square miles that encompass the region serve as home to approximately 12 million people - including 100 percent of the population in the District of Columbia, 93 percent of Maryland, 62 percent of Virginia, and 12 percent of West Virginia.

The Washington/Baltimore area, unlike many other areas designated as HIDTAs, has never been a major gateway for illegal drugs into the United States, though it has evolved as a distribution hub for the Mid-Atlantic. Rather, the region has been a significant drug consumption market for more than 30 years, especially for heroin and for drugs associated with street violence, such as crack and PCP. The presence of significant drug consumption and serious street violence is what led the Director of the Office National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to establish the Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (W/B HIDTA) in 1994.

Federal, state, and local law enforcement officials responding to the 2023 *W/B HIDTA Threat Assessment Survey for Law Enforcement Initiative Supervisors* identified fentanyl, heroin, powder and crack cocaine, and prescription narcotics as the primary drug threats in their communities. With the exception of fentanyl, these drugs have been long-standing major threats in the W/B HIDTA area.

The ample drug misuse and drug-related crime that occurs in the W/B HIDTA region necessitates a continued, strategically-focused, and comprehensive approach to saving lives, preventing the initiation of drug use, and apprehending drug traffickers and money launderers.



- |               |                    |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| ★ 1 Reston    | 9 Frederick, MD    | 17 South Side      |
| ★ 2 Baltimore | 10 Frederick, VA   | 18 Warren          |
| 3 Alleghany   | 11 Greenbelt       | 19 Washington      |
| 4 Berkeley    | 12 Harford         | 20 Washington D.C. |
| 5 Carroll     | 13 Mineral         | 21 Wicomico        |
| 6 Cecil       | 14 North Peninsula | 22 Worcester       |
| 7 Charles     | 15 Richmond        |                    |
| 8 Dorchester  | 16 Roanoke         |                    |
- W/B HIDTA County





### Vision

Within the next five years, our efforts to dismantle and disrupt drug trafficking and money laundering organizations, provide treatment resources, and develop drug prevention programs will save lives and strengthen communities and families in the W/B HIDTA region.

### Mission

To reduce drug trafficking and misuse by improving interagency collaboration, promoting accurate and timely information and intelligence sharing, and providing specialized training and other resources to its law enforcement, intelligence, prevention, and treatment initiatives.

To accomplish its mission, the W/B HIDTA will strategically apply its resources to initiatives designed to save lives, prevent initiation of drug use, and apprehend drug traffickers and money launderers.

## Washington/Baltimore HIDTA Leadership

An executive board comprised of federal, state, and local representatives from law enforcement, treatment, prevention, public safety, and criminal justice agencies from across the region, and an executive director lead the W/B HIDTA. The executive board assesses the drug trafficking threats found in the region; develops a strategy to address the threats; designs initiatives to implement the strategy; and proposes funding needed to carry out the initiatives.

### Thomas Carr Executive Director



Director Carr has served as the executive director of the W/B HIDTA since its formation in 1994. He also serves as the executive director of the Center for Drug Policy and Prevention at the University of Baltimore.

Director Carr designed and implemented over 150 drug task forces, 18 drug treatment/criminal justice, and five drug prevention initiatives during the last 26 years.

As chair of the HIDTA Program’s Performance Management Process Committee, he established metrics to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of drug law enforcement, treatment, prevention, and criminal intelligence initiatives. Director Carr worked with ONDCP and nine other HIDTAs to develop an Opioid Response Strategy. He also led the development of the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP), a real-time overdose surveillance system used to identify spikes in fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses.

### Special Agent in Charge Jarod Forget Drug Enforcement Administration 2020-2021 HIDTA Executive Committee Chair



DEA Special Agent in Charge Jarod Forget is responsible for DEA offices and mission throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. This includes expanding the DEA’s high level of investigative and regulatory services throughout area communities, working on new and innovative ways to combat and protect families

against the national opioid crisis and violent crime across the region, expanding public outreach and prevention programs, and providing important insight into the DEA’s work across the MD-DC-VA region.

Prior to his selection, Forget served as Assistant Special Agent in Charge (ASAC) of the Washington Division, overseeing groups across Northern Virginia, Maryland, and D.C., and establishing the new D.C. Heroin-Violent Crime Task Force. This task force focuses on violent heroin and fentanyl suppliers responsible for drug overdoses across the region.

Forget joined the DEA in 2004 as a special agent assigned to DEA’s New York Drug Enforcement Task Force. From there, he spent a number of years working at the Guadalajara, Mexico Office, directing many high-profile enforcement operations against Mexico’s most notorious and ruthless drug cartels, like the Sinaloa Cartel and the New Generation Jalisco Cartel.

Throughout his career, Forget has also held leadership positions in the Miami Division, the Office of Professional Responsibility, and the Washington Division. He has led many global enforcement operations, worked to disrupt violent, large-scale, international drug trafficking organizations, shut down illicit opioid dealers from China and Mexico, and established collaborative strike forces to combat local community issues like violent crime and opioids.

Forget earned a bachelor’s degree in political science and a master’s degree in international affairs from Northeastern University.



EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Washington/Baltimore HIDTA

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <b>CHAIR</b><br>Special Agent in Charge Jarod Forget<br>Drug Enforcement Administration                         |  | <b>VICE-CHAIR</b><br>Executive Director Glenn Fueston<br>Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth & Victim Services |  |
| FEDERAL MEMBERS   |  |   |  |
| U.S. Attorney Jessica D. Aber<br>U.S. Attorney's Office<br>Eastern District of Virginia                         |  | Inspector in Charge Dan Adame<br>U.S. Postal Inspection Service<br>Washington Division                                  |  |
| U.S. Attorney Erik Barron<br>U.S. Attorney's Office<br>Maryland   |  |   |  |
| U.S. Marshal Robert Dixon<br>U.S. Marshals Service<br>District of Columbia                                      |  | U.S. Attorney Matthew Graves<br>U.S. Attorney's Office<br>District of Columbia  |  |
| U.S. Marshal Johnny Hughes<br>U.S. Marshals Service<br>District of Maryland                                     |  |   |  |
| U.S. Attorney William Ihlenfeld, II<br>U.S. Attorney's Office<br>Northern District of West Virginia             |  | Special Agent in Charge Wayne Jacobs<br>Federal Bureau of Investigation   |  |
| Special Agent in Charge Timothy Jones<br>Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives                   |  |   |  |
| U.S. Attorney Christopher Kavanaugh<br>U.S. Attorney's Office<br>Western District of Virginia                   |  | Special Agent in Charge James Mancuso<br>Homeland Security Investigations   |  |
| Special Agent in Charge Charlie Patterson<br>Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives               |  |   |  |
| Special Agent in Charge Tom Sobocinski<br>Federal Bureau of Investigation                                       |  | Special Agent in Charge Tom Sobocinski<br>Federal Bureau of Investigation   |  |
| Special Agent in Charge Raymond Villanueva<br>ICE-Homeland Security Investigations<br>Washington Field Division |  |   |  |
| Vacant<br>U.S. Marshals Service<br>Eastern District of Virginia   |  |   |  |
| STATE AND LOCAL MEMBERS   |  |   |  |
| Chief Malik Aziz<br>Prince George's County Police Department  |  | Colonel Jan Cahill<br>West Virginia State Police  |  |
| Sheriff Mike Chapman<br>Loudoun County Sheriff's Office   |  |   |  |
| Chief Robert Contee<br>Metropolitan Police Department   |  | Sheriff Jeffrey Gahler<br>Harford County Sheriff's Office   |  |
| Secretary Robert Green<br>Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services                        |  |   |  |
| Chief Howard Hall<br>Roanoke County Police Department   |  | Commissioner Michael Harrison<br>Baltimore Police Department  |  |
| State Attorney Marilyn Mosby<br>Baltimore City State's Attorney Office  |  |   |  |
| Superintendent Woodrow Jones<br>Maryland State Police   |  | Chief Charles Penn<br>Arlington County Police Department  |  |
| Superintendent Garry Settle<br>Virginia State Police  |  |   |  |
| Chief Gerald Smith<br>Richmond Police Department  |  | Bureau Chief Suzanne Somerville, LCSW<br>Arlington County Substance Abuse Center  |  |
| Chief George Swartwood<br>Martinsburg Police Department   |  |   |  |
| Chief Mark Talbot<br>Hampton Police Division  |  |   |  |

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Ms. Ramona Boland, National Training Award Winner



Ramona Boland, the W/B HIDTA's training manager, joined the W/B HIDTA in May 2014 after working for 11 years at a small private school in Virginia. In her prior position, Ms. Boland served as a technology teacher, and as the school's senior technical support specialist, in which she educated faculty and staff in the use of different types of software and technical devices. Ms. Boland's strong belief in technology-assisted learning has made her passionate about following trends in research, theories, innovations, and technologies in the education field at the private school. Ms. Boland has unquestionably brought that passion to her position at the W/B HIDTA.

Ms. Boland says that she "loves to experiment with novel educational techniques and technologies" which enable her to "seize fresh opportunities for enhancing the learning experience." In addition to her technical expertise, Ms. Boland is a graphic designer. She uses these skills to create enhanced learning materials and presentations for W/B HIDTA training classes that are both engaging and interactive.

In 2019, Ms. Boland had the foresight to pitch the development of an online training program. In January 2020, she was granted access to a training platform on which the W/B HIDTA could host the virtual training. In only three months, Ms. Boland designed the courses, produced the content, and conducted testing of these courses just in time to debut as the COVID-19 pandemic emerged. As a result of her diligence, the W/B HIDTA continued its training unabated despite the shutdowns that were occurring nationwide.

W/B HIDTA Executive Director Tom Carr stated, "During the worldwide pandemic, Ms. Boland's commitment to developing, implementing, and evaluating a variety of innovative training curricula resulted in the provision of world-class, online training to HIDTA personnel in treatment, law

enforcement, and prevention; and to numerous HIDTAs across the United States. Under her leadership, the W/B HIDTA still provided 16,568 hours of training in the midst of the pandemic. We trained 1,548 students, which was 126% of the expected number of students to be trained."

When the W/B HIDTA began creating a new version of its Case Explorer software, known as "Gen 3," a new training course and new supplemental materials were needed. Since it was not possible to create the user training course and related materials until the software re-creation was completed, Ms. Boland had four weeks in which to create the new training course and its materials. Impressively, she delivered these products several days early.

Developing the Gen 3 training required that Ms. Boland create an online training curriculum and an online, self-paced training program. This involved filming and editing all of the raw footage, testing the training with a pilot group, editing the course based on the pilot group's feedback, and launching the course on the training platform before Gen 3's official rollout in October 2021.

As a result of Ms. Boland's efforts to recruit and train local Case Explorer administrators/trainers, the W/B HIDTA now has over 350 locally-embedded trainers. This has saved thousands of dollars in training funds that the W/B HIDTA then spent elsewhere, and provided valuable training across the W/B HIDTA region.

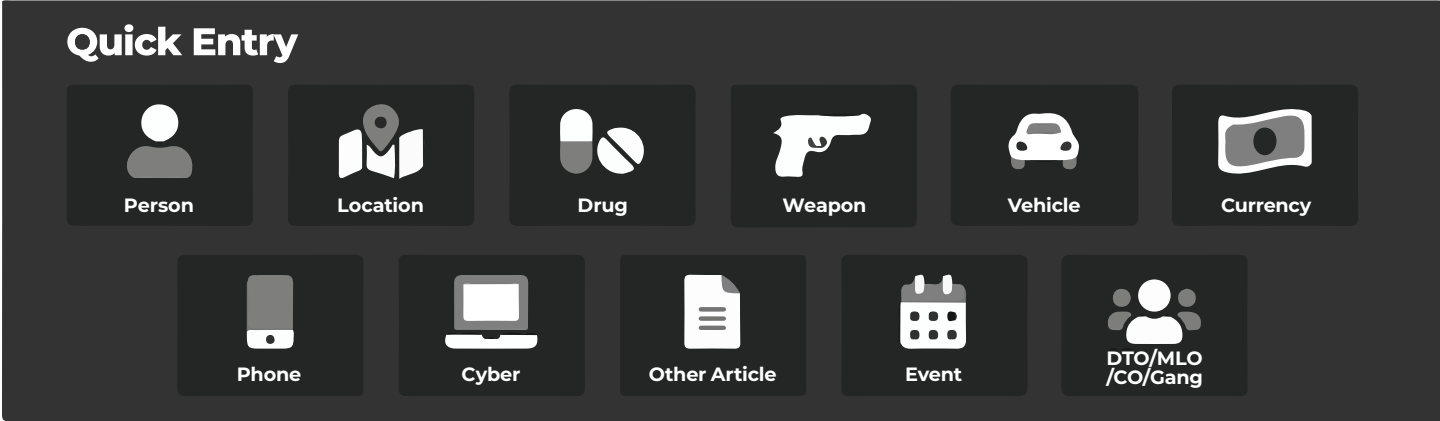
As a result of Ms. Boland's dedication to excellence, provision of timely and relevant training to the entire HIDTA community, and her extraordinary work ethic, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy awarded Ms. Boland with the Mary Marshall Award for Outstanding HIDTA Support Staff. This competitive award is presented to one support staff member among all 33 HIDTA programs across the country.

Ms. Boland earned a B.A. in political science from George Mason University. She and her husband of 36 years have three children, and live in Northern Virginia.



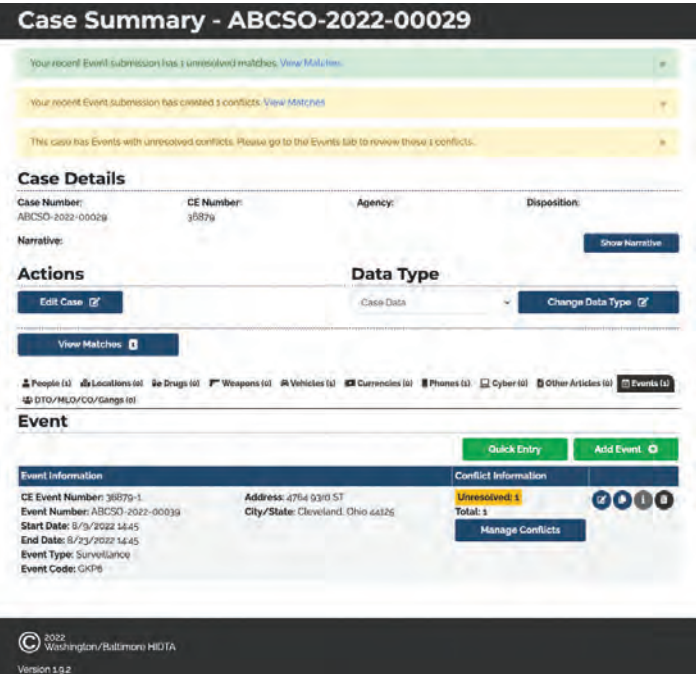
TEAM RECOGNITION

Case Explorer Generation 3 Rolls Out as a Success

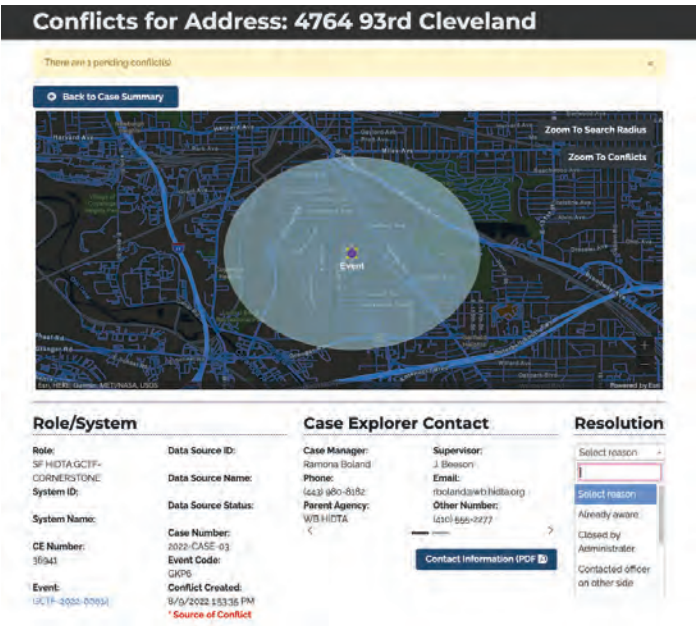


Case Explorer is a web-based tool that provides event and target deconfliction, case management, and investigative data matching. In addition to increasing officer safety, the software is free to all law enforcement.

Case Explorer supports the entry of case data, criminal intelligence, and unconfirmed tip data.

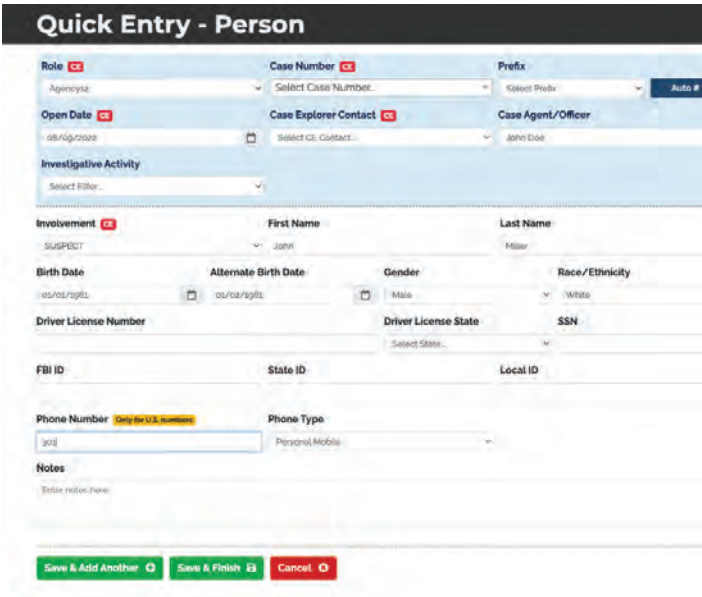


Recognized as one of three nationwide deconfliction services, the software interfaces with other event deconfliction systems to provide nationwide event deconfliction.



Case Explorer also works with the HIDTA Performance Management Program (PMP), the nationally-recognized Overdose Mapping Application Program (ODMAP) through ODFORM, and the Communications Analysis Portal (CAP) to streamline data entry, allowing law enforcement to enter data in one system and perform deconfliction.

Through 2021, the W/B HIDTA completed the development of Case Explorer Generation 3 (Gen 3) and began rolling it out to its user base. Gen 3 has many new features, including mobile compatibility, quick entry, new entity types, and one-line geocoding.



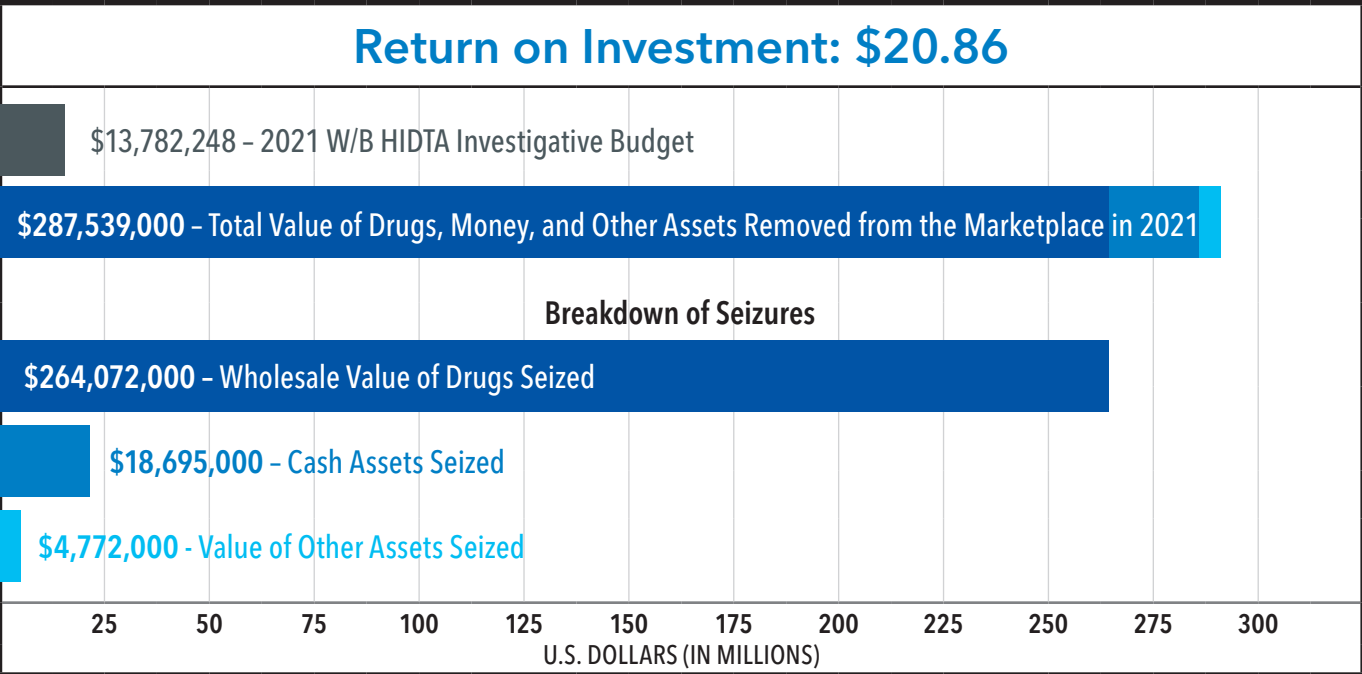
The W/B HIDTA also developed training for Gen 3 to prepare for the Gen 3 rollout. This included the development of training videos for a virtual, self-paced training environment, and the development of training materials for webinars.





LAW ENFORCEMENT

The W/B HIDTA invested \$13,782,248 to support 44 multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional law enforcement initiatives and two prosecutor initiatives in 2021. These initiatives focused on identifying and disrupting/dismantling drug trafficking organizations and money laundering organizations. The return on investment for these activities, calculated as the ratio of the W/B HIDTA's investigative budget to the wholesale value of drugs, money and other assets seized from traffickers was \$20.86 for every HIDTA dollar spent.



In 2021, federal, state, and local law enforcement officers from over 80 agencies worked in HIDTA-funded initiatives, which were collocated in 20 sites across the region.



Using Case Explorer software developed by the W/B HIDTA, these officers shared information on suspected persons and criminal organizations; and on the locations where upcoming law enforcement operations will occur, to ensure that officers are not working the same or similar cases. This increased officer safety and operational efficiency. Currently, 20 HIDTAs and law enforcement agencies across the country use Case Explorer software, with more anticipated in 2022.

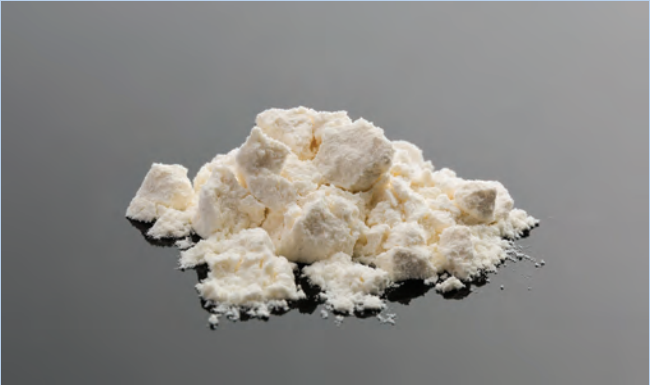
W/B HIDTA initiatives deconflicted shared contacts involving 122 drug trafficking and/or money laundering organizations; and over 2,847 events.

Eliminating Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering Organizations in the Region

W/B HIDTA-sponsored law enforcement initiatives disrupted or dismantled 117 drug trafficking/money laundering organizations, to include:

- 10 INTERNATIONAL DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS
- 59 MULTI-STATE DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS
- 48 LOCAL DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATIONS

| Quantity of Drugs Removed from the Marketplace |           |        |
|--|-----------|--------|
| Drug Seized                                    | Kilograms | D.U.   |
| Fentanyl                                       | 83        |        |
| Heroin   | 112       |        |
| Cocaine Hcl/Crack                              | 5,749     |        |
| Methamphetamine/ICE                            | 78        |        |
| Prescription Drugs: Narcotics                  | 52        | 11,924 |
| Prescription Drugs: CNS Depressants            | 3         | 6,063  |
| Sytnhetic Hallucinogens                        | 72        | 1,790  |
| Marijuana/Cannabis                             | 13,377    | 384    |
| Marijuana Indoor                               | 219       |        |
| Marijuana Outdoor                              | 127       |        |
| Other Drugs                                    | 217       | 2,596  |





# W/B HIDTA Outstanding Investigative Effort

## Hampton Roads Regional Drug Initiative

During a prolonged, complex, international investigation, the Hampton Roads Regional Drug Initiative (HRRDI) dismantled a Mexico-based narcotics distribution network with documented links to the violent Sinaloa Cartel. Investigators determined that this organization was attempting to establish a national methamphetamine distribution system in the Hampton Roads, VA area, which the objective of using Hampton Roads to transport and distribute significant quantities of methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin throughout the United States.

This case began with the development of a confidential source who was both capable of and successful in arranging the delivery of multi-pound quantities of methamphetamine from Mexico and California to Virginia for distribution. This source received seven pounds of methamphetamine from an organizational member in Rhode Island, and frequently negotiated with high-ranking members of the organization in California and Mexico, which included an in-person meeting in Mazatlan, Mexico.

During the Mazatlan meeting and with the assistance of the Mexico Federal Police, investigators identified Luis Soto-Ferro and Jesus Romero-Parra as high-ranking members of the organization responsible for the smuggling and transportation of substantial quantities of methamphetamine into the United States for distribution throughout the country, including the Hampton Roads area. The confidential source, Soto-Ferro, and Romero-Parra also agreed to coordinate the delivery of a significant quantity of methamphetamine to the Hampton Roads area.



Based on the successful Mazatlan meeting, HRRDI planned and coordinated an enforcement operation in anticipation of a delivery of methamphetamine from Soto-Ferro and Romero-Parra. During this enforcement operation, the source met with a member of the organization, identified as Irania Camargo-Luque, and seized 32 pounds of methamphetamine—representing the largest seizure of methamphetamine in the Hampton Roads area in at least the past 20 years. Camargo-Luque was arrested and later sentenced to 10 years in federal prison. A subsequent enforcement operation related to an organizational member transporting narcotics in North Carolina yielded the arrest of Jorge Perez-Miramontes and the seizure of a kilogram of heroin. Perez-Miramontes was indicted and ultimately sentenced to 17 years in federal prison.



Investigators also focused on important organizational members in Mexico. The HRRDI collaborated with the U.S. Attorney's office and the Office of International Affairs to obtain provisional arrest warrants for Mexico-based Soto-Ferro and Romero-Parr, earlier identified as Sinaloa Cartel members. HRRDI coordinated with DEA Mexico City Office and the Mexican Federal Police, which produced the arrest of Soto-Ferro in Sinaloa, Mexico. The Mexican Government has granted the extradition of Soto-Ferro to the United States. Meanwhile, a provisional arrest warrant for Romero-Parra is pending approval from the Office of International Affairs.

The investigation involved complicated international coordination, including

conducting investigative and enforcement operations in Mexico. Most importantly, the HRRDI's efforts prevented the Sinaloa Cartel from establishing a distribution network based in Hampton Roads, VA. If this network had been established, the Sinaloa Cartel would have been capable of distributing significant quantities of narcotics throughout the United States. The significant coordination included DEA Boston Strike Force, DEA Nuevo Laredo Resident Office, DEA Mexico County Office, United States Postal Inspection Service, DEA Chicago Division Office, U.S. Attorney's Office, the Office of International Affairs, Policia Federal (Mexico), and Mexican Agencia de Investigacion Criminal Interpol Unit.





Baltimore DEA Heroin Initiative

This investigation, which began in May 2020 and culminated in September 2021, involved an investigation of Ronald Alexander, a prominent drug trafficker in Northwest Baltimore. Throughout the entirety of the investigation, Mr. Alexander was actively employed by “Safe Streets,” an organization whose purpose is to reduce violence and crime in Baltimore through intervention. Further, investigators confirmed that Mr. Alexander was engaged in the distribution of fentanyl and other dangerous narcotics, and that he was using his affiliation with Safe Streets to evade law enforcement in Baltimore—including one occasion to avoid arrest when police seized a large quantity of fentanyl from him.



As the investigation progressed, investigators determined that Mr. Alexander supplied and operated a “drug shop” in Northwest Baltimore. He also had distributors working for him in the area. During the execution of search warrants of residences belonging to Mr. Alexander and an associate, law enforcement officers seized a 9 mm semi-automatic pistol, six cartridges of ammunition, over 350 grams of a heroin and fentanyl mixture, more than 100 grams of powdered caffeine, numerous digital scales, drug packaging material, suspected cutting agents, and Safe Streets apparel. Law enforcement officers also seized \$134,499 in U.S. currency.



The investigation ended with the sentencing of Mr. Alexander’s associate to 10 years in federal prison for conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, specifically 40 grams or more of fentanyl. This associate also was forced to forfeit the \$134,999 in cash seized during the aforementioned search warrant. In September 2021, a U.S. District Judge sentenced Mr. Alexander, age 50, to 135 months in federal prison, followed by eight years of supervised release, for conspiracy to distribute fentanyl, heroin, and powder and crack cocaine. Three additional members of the Alexander drug trafficking organization were convicted federally for their roles in the drug trafficking conspiracy.

The W/B HIDTA Investigative Support Center (ISC), an established leader in intelligence analysis and innovation, provides analytical support for developing leads to further an investigation, and evidentiary products required for successful prosecution. Each of the W/B HIDTA’s 20 collocated sites are linked electronically to the ISC, which collects, analyzes, and disseminates information and intelligence on drug trafficking, money laundering, violence, gangs, and weapons trafficking to support both HIDTA initiatives and participating agencies. Unique to the ISC is its ability to exploit big data through network analysis. The ISC is heavily involved with information technology projects that contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of other programs, and agencies. These efforts have led to the advancement of intelligence led-prosecutions and the creation of data sharing intelligence networks.

ISC analysts provided a broad range of support services to 352 cases in 2021.

Examples of case support analyses provided by the ISC include:

- Association/link/network analysis
- Flow analysis
- Commodity flow analysis
- Crime pattern analysis
- Financial analysis
- Geospatial analysis
- Telephone communication analysis



In 2021, the W/B HIDTA ISC moved from its longtime home in Greenbelt, MD, where the W/B HIDTA was headquartered, to two locations—one in Baltimore City, and one in Reston, VA. The purpose of the moves was to serve the initiatives located in both places.

Also in 2021, the W/B HIDTA ISC started its ISC fellowship program, in which participants from various law enforcement agencies are treated as ISC analysts, and given all of the tools permanent ISC analysts have. The fellows are able to support their agencies with the ISC’s resources, data, and expertise. In return, the fellows usually provide the W/B HIDTA with case information and data that can be used to make additional case connections, or provide otherwise unknown case information that can be used for deconfliction and coordination with their home department’s case agent. So far, the W/B HIDTA ISC has hosted a fellow from the Baltimore City State’s Attorney’s Office, and two members of the Prince George’s County (MD) Police Department.





The W/B HIDTA funded and supported **21,619** hours of training for its law enforcement, analytical, and management resources, to include:

- **10,985** hours of enforcement training to **1,090** students
- **9,147** hours of analytical training to over **576** students
- **1,487** hours of management training to nearly **485** students.

When surveyed two months after they received the training:

- **95 percent** of the students responded that the training course improved their knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform their jobs
- **77 percent** responded that they used the knowledge, skills, and abilities they acquired in the training course

The W/B HIDTA granted \$2,775,745 in 2021 to support initiatives that provide integrated drug treatment services and criminal justice supervision for substance-dependent offenders. Funds continue to be used to address identified gaps in the treatment and recovery systems in W/B HIDTA communities.

Treatment initiatives must incorporate drug testing and graduated sanctions for all offenders. They must include an assessment of the individual’s drug use and criminal history, and placement in the appropriate level of service, such as outpatient, intensive outpatient, residential, or community re-entry.



W/B HIDTA Treatment Grantees:

- Alexandria (VA) Treatment Criminal Justice System
- Arlington County (VA) Treatment
- Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems
- Berkeley (WV) Substance Abuse Initiative
- Brooke’s House (Hagerstown, MD)
- Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (in Washington, D.C.)
- Fairfax County (VA) Alcohol Substance Abuse Services
- Fairfax County (VA) Sheriff’s Department STAR 360 Program
- Northern Shenandoah Valley (VA) Substance Abuse Coalition
- Prince William County (VA) Treatment Program
- Richmond (VA) Adult Drug Treatment Court
- Substance Abuse and Addiction Recovery Alliance of Virginia





# TREATMENT SPOTLIGHT

## Brooke's House: They've Got You



Brooke Simmers had excelled in soccer and basketball when she was younger. She had an infectious smile and cared deeply for her friends and family. Brooke also, however, suffered from substance use disorder when she was close to 20 years old. In 2015, she asked her father, Kevin Simmers, to build or buy a house for her to operate so that she could help others overcome their addictions. Sadly, Brooke passed away in her church parking lot, having driven there after binging on heroin.

From Brooke's dream, and through Kevin's determination and the community's spirit of giving, Brooke's House stands in Hagerstown, MD to inspire and empower women suffering from substance use disorder by providing them a safe, stable, and emotionally-supportive environment while they are in the early stages of recovery. Brooke's memory lives on, as an untold amount of lives have been touched and saved by the services it has provided.



Brooke's House provides individual and group counseling services. Individual sessions are offered throughout the week to meet the client's individual needs. The sessions use cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, dialectical behavior therapy, and other counseling techniques to assist each client in developing skills to facilitate her reintegration into society.

Intensive outpatient services focus on stabilization while in recovery, interpersonal skills, enhancing self-esteem, healthy decision-making skills, life skills, coping skills, refusal skills, relapse prevention skills, how to manage urges and cravings, understanding the brain chemistry of addiction, progression of the disease of addiction, introduction to the Twelve Steps, spirituality, and the stages of change. Each client receives individual sessions at least two times a month, which focus on individual treatment goals.

Group treatment services are offered throughout the week to meet clients' needs. Groups focus on relapse prevention, interpersonal skills, enhancing self-esteem, healthy decision-making skills, life skills, coping skills, refusal skills, recreational activities, and other skills that will assist the client in preparing for her reintegration into society.

Brooke's House has an exceptionally-high completion rate. While the counseling services are partially responsible for this, the operation of social enterprises which provide job and interpersonal skills training, and the loving and safe environment Brooke's House provides are also responsible for its success. Kevin Simmers stated, "Brooke's House is all about giving ladies a second chance, and part of their recovery is creating job skills, occupational training, and giving them a purpose."



Brooke's House offers a variety of social enterprises and other job training opportunities. Brooke's House Chocolate is available for purchase online and at certain retailers in Hagerstown. On Mondays, Brooke's House operates a dog bathing and grooming service. Brooke's House also runs a junk removal service in the Hagerstown area, and a thriving thrift store. The organization also trains clients in welding skills, and helps them earn their commercial driving license. These social enterprises provide program graduates with,



as Kevin Simmers describes, "income for living expenses, which helps to contribute to long-term sobriety."

The W/B HIDTA is proud to have been bsupporter of this organization for many years. Sarah, a Brooke's House alumna, stated, "The structure the program is founded on instilled some self-control and responsibility in me. It taught me healthy boundaries and how to create new relationships."



# W/B HIDTA-Supported Prevention Initiatives

The W/B HIDTA invested \$418,471 in 2021 to support prevention activities. Its prevention initiatives are designed to prevent, identify, or mitigate substance use across the region by coordinating community and local government resources to foster protective factors, mitigate risk factors, increase knowledge around substances, and link individuals to appropriate levels of care.

Prevention initiatives include law enforcement partnerships participating at operational and policy-making levels. A nexus has been formed among law enforcement and other public and private sector program elements, with an ongoing effort to expand alternative funding to enhance the W/B HIDTA's prevention component.

- Badges for Baseball in Baltimore, Richmond, VA, and Roanoke, VA
- Prince William County (VA) Prevention
- The Martinsburg Initiative in Martinsburg, WV

## PREVENTION SPOTLIGHT

### The Martinsburg Initiative Berkeley County, WV

The Martinsburg Initiative (TMI) is a police, school, community, health, and education partnership formed in 2016 to address Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and their role as a risk factor for substance use disorders in Berkeley County, WV. Its mission is preventing substance use, building strong families, and empowering the community. TMI approaches opioid misuse and addiction on a larger scale, from a full spectrum prevention perspective.

Initially driven by community policing, TMI subsequently evolved into a partnership consisting of the Martinsburg Police Department (MPD), Berkeley County Schools, Shepherd University, and the W/B HIDTA.

Now in its sixth year, TMI ultimately serves as a cooperative partnership between public safety, public education, and healthcare agencies.

#### Public Safety

Partnering with public safety organizations is a key tenet of TMI's mission. TMI partners with public safety in three distinct ways:

- 1) Training
- 2) The "Handle with Care" program
- 3) Classroom visits

#### Trauma Informed Police Training

Trauma-informed training provides local law enforcement professionals with the information and tools necessary to identify and appropriately interact with individuals who may have been exposed to or are susceptible to experiencing trauma. In October, 2021, TMI trained 30 Berkeley County sheriff's deputies in cutting-edge techniques related to administering public safety regulations from a trauma informed perspective safely and effectively.

#### Handle with Care

As a part of a statewide initiative, TMI has helped to facilitate the program, "Handle with Care" (HwC) in Berkeley County. The premise of HwC is that when a law enforcement officer

encounters a child during a call, that child's information is forwarded to his/her school before the school bell rings the next day. The school implements individual, class, and whole school trauma-sensitive curricula so that traumatized children are "Handled with Care." If a child needs more intervention, on-site trauma-focused mental healthcare is available at the school. In 2021-2022, law enforcement officers submitted 95 HwC notifications. TMI-funded social workers and case managers responded within 48 hours to 69 notifications.



#### Police Classroom Visits

In partnership with Berkeley County Schools and MPD, police classroom visits aim to cultivate community connections and nurture positive student perceptions of police. Classroom visits promote reciprocal positive engagement between officers and students through a variety of educational, recreational, and social activities, while fostering students'

listening, recreational, and social skills. In 2021-2022, MPD officers conducted 142 in-person classroom visits with 60 classrooms in TMI-participating schools, receiving two or more visits.

#### Public Education

TMI partners with public education entities to identify, risk stratify, and offer interventions for individuals experiencing risk factors of trauma or substance misuse. This partnership primarily entails trauma training for the community and school staff, and the provision of resources to create positive experiences for students.



#### Trauma Training

TMI is passionate about providing trauma-informed training to key community groups to build awareness and provide tools to identify and serve children who may have been exposed to or are at-risk for experiencing trauma. Between 2019 and 2022, TMI trained 51 community members, 13 Shepherd University students, and 30 healthcare providers. Additionally, TMI provided trauma training classes to 554 educators between 2019 and 2022.

Berkeley County educators who attended the trauma training had the option of pursuing a Trauma Sensitive certification, which entailed taking an immersive training track, followed by classroom review, and three and six-month follow-up trainings. Between 2021 and 2022, 57 of these educators earned this certification.





### After School Programs

TMI has been working to ensure that students are offered appropriate and positive experiences via such activities as after-school programming, evidence-based drug-prevention, psychoeducation, and mentoring. After-school programs provide students with additional opportunities to improve their academic, social-emotional, and self-regulation skills, and to build relationships with peers and program staff. During the 2021-2022 school year, 368 Berkeley County school students participated in 11 after school programs, ranging from art clubs for middle school students to evidence-based drug prevention programming for teens.

### Too Good For Drugs

During the 2021-2022 school year, TMI staff and school social workers facilitated “Too Good for Drugs” (TGFD) programming at 11 schools across Martinsburg. Sixty-eight percent of the classrooms received 10 lessons. During post-test evaluations for TGFD participants, the students showed improvement in communication, goal setting, and awareness of how to use evidence-based tools, and other methods for navigating away from drug misuse.

### Mentoring

TMI matches children with adult mentors from the community who have been trained in trauma-informed skills to facilitate safe and fun experiences for their mentees. In the 2021-2022 period, TMI’s “lead mentor” worked with 27 students in 298 sessions, with an average of 5.84 contact hours per student. Seven volunteers mentored 32 students in 467 sessions, with an average of 9.5 hours per student. Fifty-nine students have received ongoing mentoring from safe adults within their community as a part of TMI’s larger goal of mitigating the negative consequences of substance misuse or trauma.



### Nurturing Parenting

In addition to working to increase student awareness and understanding of how to effectively avoid drug use, TMI staff have implemented evidence-based programming designed to increase caregiver skills using the curriculum, Nurturing Parenting, which aims to build parenting skills. Day Report Center (DRC) and TMI staff offered two Nurturing Parenting courses, 1) Nurturing Parenting: Families in Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery; and 2) Nurturing Parenting: Nurturing Skills for Families. Between 2021-2022, 209 caregivers attended 148 sessions, with 12 parents completing the full course.

One caregiver-participant stated, “After last week’s class, I listened to what the trainer said

and started to pay more attention to my [child]. Before, my [child] was throwing things at my [other child] and acting out. Since I have been paying more attention to [child], [child] has stopped throwing things and has not been acting out as much.”



### Social Worker Case Management

TMI school-embedded social workers support students’ educational and social-emotional learning through the implementation of a variety of evidence-based, developmentally-appropriate support programs. The social workers also provide family support and referrals to community agencies based upon school feedback. In the 2021-2022 school year, Berkeley County schools referred 174 students to TMI social workers for services. Furthermore, TMI’s social workers received 38 referrals from the community, and 14 referrals from public safety.

TMI is based in the science of trauma prevention and mitigation of the negative effects of adverse childhood experiences. Following an ACES screening, social workers measure each student in his/her caseload’s strengths, difficulties, and resiliency, and assign a correlative risk level as either low, moderate, or high. In 2021-2022, TMI social workers carried caseloads of 136 students – 20 of whom were low risk, 49 were moderate risk, and 67 were high risk. The social workers provided students the appropriate tiered TMI

services, behavioral health interventions, and other wrap-around support services based on their level of risk. The students’ improvements were staggering – 50% of students receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 services improved their attendance, 69% improved their grades, and behavior referrals for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students decreased or stayed the same for 79% of students.

### Public Health

Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral for Treatment (SBIRT) is an evidence-based practice used to identify, reduce, and prevent substance misuse disorders. TMI provides support for a “Linkages to Care Coordinator” and an SBIRT provider in the West Virginia University Hospitals Berkeley Medical Center Emergency Department. The SBIRT team reported that, from December 2019 – June 2022, of the 50,590 individuals visiting the emergency department, 3,972 individuals 18 and older visiting the ED (7.8%) were identified by screening and referred to SBIRT providers. During the same time period, 1,520 brief interventions were delivered, with 1,067 referrals to treatment made on behalf of patients who screened positive for substance misuse. There were also 915 referrals for supportive services made for patients as requested.





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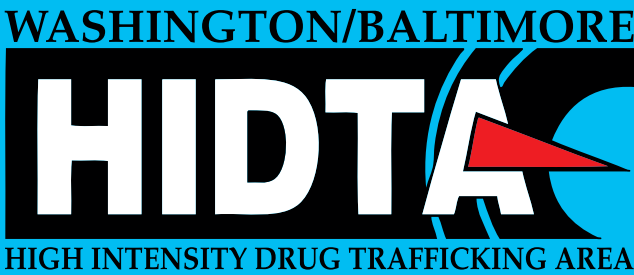
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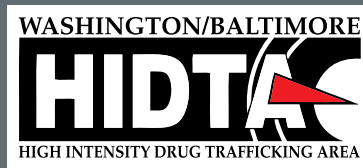
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