



## Meth Seizures Skyrocket

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While the nation focuses on fighting opioids, more people are turning to methamphetamine. Seizures of the drug are rising, according to a report by the Wall Street Journal.

According to Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) officials, seizures of methamphetamine rose 118% between 2010 and 2017, according to the Cato Institute. In 2017, law enforcement conducted 347,807 seizures of meth.

At the same time, overdose deaths from the illicit stimulant are rising, reaching more than 10,000 in 2017.

While meth has been more common in southern and western states, it is now showing up regularly in areas where it wasn't prevalent before, including New England. There, DEA officer Jon DeLena said that the alarming trajectory of meth use reminded him of another drug that has rocked the region.

"Everybody's biggest fear is what it's going to look like if meth hits us like fentanyl did," DeLena told The Wall Street Journal.

The influx in meth is said to be driven in part by increased production of cheaper and more potent product by Mexican cartels. While in the past, meth production happened on a small scale, cartels have the means and motivation to push larger quantities into more regions.

That is why Dr. Jeffrey A. Singer, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, argues that the U.S. should stop focusing on "fighting" the war on drugs, and instead focus on treating the underlying conditions that leave people vulnerable to substance abuse.

"Meth's comeback shows why waging a war on drugs is like playing a game of 'Whack-a-Mole,'" Singer wrote for the Washington Examiner last year. "The government cracked down on Sudafed (affecting millions of cold and allergy sufferers) while SWAT teams descended on domestic meth labs, and Mexican cartels popped up with a cheaper and better manufacturing system.

"In the case of opioids, authorities reduced opioid prescription and production, and nonmedical users migrated over to more dangerous heroin and fentanyl, driving up the overdose rate."

In response to the most recent numbers, Singer wrote, "In 2005 Congress acted to address the 'Meth Crisis.' Shortly thereafter it turned its attention to the 'Opioid Crisis.' Now it is dealing

with a fentanyl crisis and a replay of the meth crisis. How many more will die or suffer needlessly before lawmakers wise up?”

As meth overdoses become more common, it has highlighted the limits of addiction medications. While opioid overdoses can often be reversed with Narcan (naloxone) and opioid use disorder can be treated with medication, there are few medical options to help people who abuse meth.

“We’re realizing that we don’t have everything we might wish we had to address these different kinds of drugs,” psychiatrist Margaret Jarvis, a distinguished fellow for the American Society of Addiction Medicine, said earlier this year.