

June Sheriff's Column

Our community, the state and even the nation has been plagued by an opiate crisis for several years. I believe it is very important that we work together to find solutions. As we know, it is not solely a law enforcement problem but a community problem. However, we must all work together to fix it.

Over the last 3 ½ years we have focused on treatment, education and enforcement as they are all important in the road to prevention and recovery.

Treatment:

1. As a member of the Dodge County Criminal Justice Collaborating Committee (CJCC) we provide oversight of the Impaired Driving and Drug Courts. We work closely with the health and human services director, district attorney, judges, public defender and other community leaders to make positive changes. I currently have an excellent working relationship with the health and human services director as we work for more evidenced based prevention techniques through a grant Dodge County recently was awarded.
2. As a member of the CARE for Dodge County Advisory Committee along with other community members we are working to bring hospital-based recovery, providing recovery coaches for those struggling with addiction.
3. We worked with Alarus Healthcare and encouraged them to locate in Beaver Dam. Having a private treatment provider in Dodge County to assist individuals is a huge benefit as county services simply do not have the capacity to help everyone in need.
4. We administer Vivitrol (drug used to inhibit the effects of heroin rendering it useless) to individuals about to be released from the jail. They must also be actively involved in treatment as a pathway to recovery.

Education:

1. Presentations have been given via radio, television, at service clubs and other organizations on heroin's effects on users and the community.
2. Numerous articles have been published regarding heroin in hopes of educating the public.
3. Presentations have been given at schools to students on how to avoid opiate use and its effects on their future.
4. The county board and committees have been educated making them aware of drug issues in hopes of bringing additional support from them to our communities.
5. We have educated our law enforcement officers on signs and symptoms of drug use so that they are able to better identify users in their everyday contacts.

Enforcement

1. A full-time position was added to our drug task force. While our extra position is currently vacant due to retirements, it is expected to be filled again soon and a deputy has been identified to fill that position.
2. The Drug Task Force, made up of law enforcement agencies around the county, have arrested several drug dealers including Lacreasha Lightfoot (heroin), the Marks Brothers (methamphetamine) and Victor Adememares (cocaine).

3. Drug interdiction efforts have increased to ensure dealers understand that Dodge County will not tolerate drug dealing. We conducted interdiction throughout the county including US 151, I41 and Madison Street in Beaver Dam.
4. The detective division has successfully investigated and made arrests in numerous drug related cases. Some of those include high profile cases like home burglaries in 2017 and robberies at a Town of Beaver Dam gas station (in collaboration with BDPD).
5. After sending a detective to human trafficking training, with collaboration of other agencies, an investigation was launched leading to federal charges of a violent sex trafficker stemming out of local strip clubs. As a result, we believe that this greatly is reducing the availability and use of illicit drugs including heroin in these clubs.
6. The Drug Endangered Children (DEC) program has been implemented to ensure wrap around investigation and services are provided in cases involving children.

These are just samplings of what we have accomplished with much more in the works. While we certainly have not solved the problem, we believe we are starting to see impacts. We understand that we will never completely resolve the problem but if any of these initiatives can save one person from becoming addicted or help them to break the addiction, the efforts are worth it as we work to keep Dodge County as a great place to live, work and visit.

Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt