



NEWSLETTER

SPRING EDITION 2016



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ADDICTION

Tackling Heroin Problem Remains Top Priority



2015-2016

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NEW CHALLENGE EMERGES IN FIGHT TO STOP HEROIN EPIDEMIC

As we've discussed before, fighting the abuse of prescription drugs and heroin is not only a national priority, but it is also a top priority of Virginia's elected officials and law enforcement agencies. No city or neighborhood is immune to the devastating effects of drug abuse.

In fact, a sobering new statistic has emerged which demonstrates just how out-of-control this problem has become in our state and much of the country: Deaths in Virginia from heroin and opioid use outnumbered highway fatalities for the first time in 2014. In fact, 728 Virginians lost their lives that year as a result of drug overdoses.

In an effort to combat this growing epidemic, which continues to ruin lives and tear families apart, Virginia Attorney General Mark R. Herring launched an aggressive multi-front campaign in 2014. To help turn the tide, resources are being targeted to help bring more prosecutions against drug dealers and traffickers, cut off distribution, support recovering addicts, and decriminalize behaviors that can save lives.

Heroin and prescription drug abuse is

not just a law enforcement issue; it is a public safety concern and a problem that is increasingly devastating many Virginia families. Part of the reason heroin abuse is so widespread is that 80 percent of heroin users started their addiction with prescription pain pills, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration.

As a result, doctors are now under enormous pressure to reduce the number of opioids they prescribe for patients. It also shows that heroin addiction can grip anyone from any background and ultimately impacts families from all walks of life.

An alarming new trend that only heightens the urgency of combating heroin use is the emergence of "heroin pills," which look like prescription pain pills and are now showing up on the streets. Heroin pills are even more addictive and potent than pain pills.

This is of grave concern for our community and we will continue to use every resource at our disposal to fight against this epidemic. As always, I ask for your support in reporting any suspicious activity.

ANNUAL SPRING CONFERENCE TAKES PLACE THIS MONTH

Over 250 Virginia sheriffs, management level deputies, and guests are taking part in the 2016 Virginia Sheriffs' Institute's Spring Conference and Virginia Sheriffs' Association Exhibition. And we expect a tremendous turnout at this year's conference to be held on April 27-29, 2016 at the Hampton Roads Convention Center, in Hampton, Virginia.

The VSI Spring Conference is an important forum for sheriffs and deputies

to discuss how legislation passed during the 2016 General Assembly could impact the duties of sheriff's offices in the state of Virginia. In addition, important training sessions to enhance crime prevention efforts by law enforcement officers are featured as part of the conference.

The Virginia Sheriffs' Association's upcoming 83rd Annual conference will be held in September in Fairfax County, Virginia.



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Do you have a Facebook account? So do we! The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute would really appreciate your "electronic approval"! Please visit our Facebook page today and like us at [www.facebook.com/vasheriffsinstitute!](http://www.facebook.com/vasheriffsinstitute)

APP HELPS PROMOTE PUBLIC SAFETY



If you have an iPhone or Android device you can now access the Ready Virginia app, which is a free mobile application that helps Virginia residents and first responders prepare for emergencies and stay informed during disasters.

Users can make a customized emergency plan, identify and collect needed emergency supplies, and get

the latest disaster news when there are widespread or high profile disaster events in the Commonwealth. Among the app's features are:

- Alerts: real-time weather and hazard alerts for your location
- Plan: make your emergency plan and share it with family and friends
- Local: GPS-enabled evacuation routes, flood risk updates, emergency manager contacts
- Checklist: essential emergency supplies to have in your kit
- Threats: learn what to do to prepare for the most likely disaster events in Virginia
- Disaster news: stay informed on current emergency events or browse through previous disaster blogs

To download this free mobile app, go to iTunes or the Google Play store.

WHO IS YOUR EMERGENCY CONTACT?

This year, the VA Department of Motor Vehicles is now asking drivers to add an emergency contact to their records, to help law enforcement in emergencies. License-holders will be able to update or delete the information online.

NATIONAL DRUG TAKE-BACK DAY APRIL 30, 2016

Law enforcement agencies across Virginia will once again be participating in the National Prescription Drug Take-Back Initiative. This year the program, which encourages our communities to properly dispose of prescription drugs, will take place on April 30, 2016, between 10:00 AM- 2:00 PM.

VSI is proud to support this important effort to keep dangerous pharmaceuticals from misuse and abuse, as well as preventing trace contamination of our water resources. To find out more about this important program and where to participate in your community, please visit http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/.

NEW ENHANCEMENT TO VA VINE PROGRAM

The Virginia Sheriffs' Association in conjunction with the Virginia Center for Policing Innovation is excited to announce the addition of Short Messaging Service (SMS) for the VA VINE program (the Victim Information and Notification Everyday) to the Commonwealth's 72 local and regional jail facilities. The VINE program, created in 2006, is designed to alert crime victims when their perpetrators are released from incarceration in Virginia jail facilities.

The program is vital to victims because it allows access to real-time information when the person who committed a crime against them is released — and provides victims with a tool they can use as part of their larger personal safety plan. Prior to the implementation of this program, victims had to go to a lengthy route to determine this kind of information, and often they ended up with outdated information or none at all.

Since the service was launched in our state, VINE has delivered more than 195,000 email notifications and supported over 2.8 million searches by phone. As of November 2015, the Commonwealth had 27,684 offenders in custody in local and regional jails and 35,475 VINE users registered.

In addition, the VINE Mobile App was launched in April of 2013 and has since recorded over 1 million mobile searches in Virginia. To register, victims and other concerned citizens can call VA VINE at 1-800-467-4943 or go online to www.vinelink.com.



PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM VSI EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JOHN W. JONES



On behalf of everyone here at the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute, I hope you and your family are eager to welcome the return of spring to the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Leading up to the busy prom and graduation season, Virginia sheriffs and deputies will be sending a message to students that underage drinking is not legal and will not be tolerated.

That's why public safety officers in your community will be stepping up enforcement efforts to make sure everyone is safe during this time of celebration for students and their families. In addition, law enforcement will be working closely with school officials to stress the importance of making responsible decisions that will prevent alcohol-related crashes and ensure our teens stay safe and alcohol-free on the roads.

At the same time, we are focused on bringing much-needed attention to the growing abuse of heroin and prescription drugs in our state — and efforts underway by Virginia's elected officials and sheriff's offices to tackle this problem head-on — which I address in this issue.

I want you to know it is my privilege to serve as Executive Director of VSI, and I urge you to contact your sheriff's office if you have any questions about the important issues we discuss in this edition of the VSI newsletter, or if any other concerns about crime prevention or public safety efforts in your community.

I deeply appreciate your involvement as a loyal supporter of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute!

Sincerely,

John W. Jones, Executive Director
Virginia Sheriffs' Institute
701 East Franklin Street, Suite 706
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SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE FAST APPROACHING!

One of the many benefits the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute offers is our scholarship program. This award — which is funded by generous VSI supporters like you — is granted to full-time or part-time students majoring in criminal justice and attending a Virginia state college or university. With the help of loyal members like you, we've awarded hundreds of scholarships to Virginia's youth with an aspiration to serve their citizens in law enforcement-related careers.

Scholarship applications are currently available to be downloaded from our website. In addition to the application, students must submit SAT/ACT scores, transcripts, an essay and if over the age of 18, a copy of their voter ID card. A full list of application materials can be found at <https://vasheriffsinstitute.org/scholarship/>. Applications are due May 1, 2016.

We Want to Hear from You ...

Drop us a note, give us a call, or send us an email.

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The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute solicits articles and comments from associate members of the Virginia Sheriffs' Institute for inclusion in this newsletter. Articles and comments should be directed to: John W. Jones, Executive Director, Virginia Sheriffs' Institute, 701 East Franklin Street, Suite 706, Richmond, VA 23219-2512, or phone (804) 225-7152.

The Virginia Sheriffs' Institute does not solicit donations by telephone.