

Testimony of Robert G. Jolley, Dallas Township Chief of Police
President of the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association
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Good Morning. My name is Robert Jolley and I am presently serving as Chief of Police in Dallas Township, Luzerne County and President of the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association. I have been a police officer for forty years and Chief of Police for fifteen.

My years of service have afforded me the opportunity to see the skyrocketing use of heroin and opioids in our community. Over the years I have seen this danger explode into our suburban and rural neighborhoods. The dramatic increase in Heroin use and deaths appeared locally about six years ago. I spoke of my years in law enforcement and truly felt that more arrests and the imprisoning of those perpetrators for the sale and possession of this illicit drug would curb the problem. Today, I am saying that we cannot simply arrest our way out of this problem. Persons arrested for heroin and opioid violations should be quickly evaluated and placed in programs that present the individual with solutions to drug problems and there by addressing the problem and protecting society.

For today's testimony I checked the arrest data for Dallas Township. We have access to all the numerical data but that fails short of truly describing the problem. I believe that what I am about to share with you better describes the problem we face.

I was visited at my office and learned of a theft that occurred at a residence and was asked if I would investigate the occurrence of missing jewelry and monies. I traveled to the home but found no indication that the home was broken into. I learned that only family had access to the residence and obtained the names of family members. The investigation revealed that thousands of dollars in jewelry had been sold throughout the county by a family member. I spoke with the seller and learned that the thefts had occurred over a period of time, and that the underlying cause was an addiction to heroin. Heroin was the cause for family to be victimized by family.

Sadly, I must share with you that I have been in homes that a loved one was lost to a drug over dose. I will never forget seeing the pain experienced by a family victimized by a drug that was known only to the lost loved one. I would also like to share that this plague has entered the homes of all peoples without regard to socio-economic standing.

Act 139 of 2014 authorized law enforcement officers in Pennsylvania to administer Naloxone to counter the effects of an overdose of heroin and opioids. In the past two years the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police, via our Virtual Training Network, has trained over five thousand officers in the use of this life saving drug. In the very near future, Dallas Township Police Officers will be issued Naloxone.

I hope that what I have shared with you indicates the desire on the part of the law enforcement community to be part of the solution. The time has arrived to abandon parochial views and truly work toward solutions regarding heroin and its abuse from a holistic position. The training of five thousand officers to save a life threatened by heroin shows that we want to do what is in the best interest of our communities. Education is always important in any undertaking and the heroin situation is no different. All shareholders must be knowledgeable as to heroin and opioid abuse, and what we learn along the way must be shared with those entrusted with educating our youth. It is equally important to address funding.

Our best made plans fail short of the mark if we do not have adequate funding for the initiatives to combat the heroin crisis.