

"Gray Death" Opioid Confirmed in Georgia

"If you put this in your body you will die, no questions asked. This is something that I want to be very clear about ... it's not a scare tactic ... it's not a shock factor. ...if you put this drug into your body you will die, it will kill you. There's a reason why it's been nicknamed Grey Death. It is deadly."

– Shelby County Alabama Drug Enforcement Task Force Commander Clay Hammac

Drug Enforcement Administration spokesman Russ Baer says gray death is a **combination** of heroin, **fentanyl** and other **fentanyl-class substances**, such as **Carfentanil**, a tranquilizer for use on elephants and other large animals. Atlanta law enforcement coined the term "gray gravel heroin" in 2012. Recently, the GBI confirmed Georgia's first gray death victim as a 24-year-old female in Brookhaven who died February 10, 2017, and described the opioid as follows:

"The gray material was found to contain a **toxic cocktail of opiate** drugs. The ingredients vary, but often contain heroin, fentanyl, furanyl fentanyl, and **U-47700**, mixed together in the same powder. The solid material has the appearance of gray concrete mixing powder, with texture variations from light/powdery to chunky/rock-like."

Reportedly, gray death can be absorbed through the skin, is 10,000 times more potent than morphine, 100 times more powerful than fentanyl, and includes Carfentanil, the elephant tranquilizer described as "crazy dangerous" by a Colorado DEA spokesman. The GBI lab first identified it as gray death in March and, so far, has found it in about 50 different drug seizures.

Three New Laws to Fight Opioid Epidemic in Georgia

Definitions

***Opioid:** a group of natural or synthetic biochemicals¹ that relieve pain the same way opiates do*

***Opiate:** a drug containing opium or any of its derivatives and acting as a sedative and narcotic*

May 9th ended the 40 days in which the governor may sign or veto bills. In those 40 days he signed over 280 bills and vetoed nine. Of those 280 bills, three concerned opioids. They are:

S.B. 88² requires the Community Health Department to create standards for drug treatment programs seeking licensure to do business in Georgia; **S.B. 121**³ takes Naloxone⁴ off the dangerous drug list, making it available for use in counteracting drug overdoses. Meaning, Naloxone will be included in rescue kits prepared by drug dispensers. Also, the governor's executive orders of 2016 will be codified. **H.B. 249**⁵ moves Prescription Drug Monitoring from the Drugs and Narcotics Agency to the Public Health Department.

Governor Deal explained his endorsements this way: "The three bills I signed into law today will enable us to more effectively fight the ongoing opioid epidemic that impacts individuals, families and communities across Georgia. I am confident that this legislation will help save lives and give hope to the victims ensnared by this epidemic as well as their loved ones."

¹ Especially, endorphins

² S.B. 88, signed by the governor May 4th, became law the same day, as specified in the bill.

³ S.B. 121, signed by the governor April 18th, became law the same day, as specified in the bill.

⁴ Naloxone was exempted from the dangerous drug list, for use in overdose prevention and inclusion in rescue kits.

⁵ H.B. 249, signed by the governor May 4th, becomes law July 1st. The bill did not specify earlier effectiveness.

New Marijuana Law Effective July 1st

The number of U.S. workers testing positive for marijuana is up 4 %. Marijuana was found in 2.5 percent of all urine tests in the 2016 general workforce, up from 2.4 % in 2015. In jobs affecting public safety 0.78 % tested positive for marijuana, up from 0.71 % in 2015. Of states allowing recreational marijuana, the number of Colorado workers testing positive rose 11 %; Washington was up 9 %. Both more than doubled the nationwide increase. Drug use was even higher among the broader population. In 2015, 6.5% of Americans age 26 and older admitted using marijuana or hashish in the prior month; in ages 18 to 25, use increased to 19.8 %.

– “Tests Show More American Workers Using Drugs,” by Lauren Weber, Wall Street Journal (WSJ), May 17, 2017

On May 9th, Governor Deal signed S.B. 16, which passed the Senate, seemingly, to simply tweak the law. But it was a bait-and-switch vehicle to carry Representative Peake’s H.B. 65 across the finish line. These are the effects of passing S.B. 16 with H.B. 65 amended onto it:

S.B. 16 containing all of H.B. 65 (a) allows Georgia residents who are issued medical marijuana registration cards to possess 20 fluid ounces of low THC oil if it’s in a pharmaceutical container labeled as such by the manufacturer. (b) Out-of-state individuals with out-of-state marijuana cards may possess 20 ounces of THC oil while on a 45-day visit to Georgia. (c) Six¹ additional conditions, plus hospice patients, are authorized for THC oil. (d) The Department of Public Health will issue a registration card to patients whose physician qualifies them for treatment.

Their Next Goal: In-State-Cultivation of Marijuana

H.R. 36 Constitutional Amendment would Legalize Marijuana that’s a Schedule I federally controlled drug is illegal to prescribe^{2(a)}, but legal to use medically^{2(b)}. In-state growth, sale, and purchase would be legal if H.R. 36 passes in 2018 and voters pass this referendum:

“Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to authorize the General Assembly to provide by general law for the regulation of the production of cannabis and sale of medical cannabis to certain individuals and further provide that the net revenue of the fees from such production be dedicated to a department and state sale taxes be dedicated to a fund to support drug treatment programs within this state?”*(*What department?)

Important Facts

- Currently, marijuana contains about four times the THC level as it did in the 60s and 70s.
- Marijuana remains active in the brain much longer than alcohol and other substances.
- Marijuana can deposit up to four times as much tar in lungs as tobacco, contains 33 chemicals that cause cancer, and, if used regularly, can raise the risk of heart attack.
- More Americans are admitted to marijuana treatment facilities than any other illegal drug.
- Physicians are not allowed to use an authorized prescription pad to prescribe marijuana, because it is a Schedule I Controlled Substance that is banned from medical practice.
- Over 95 percent of medical marijuana users do not have a long-term disease.
- Pharmacies cannot sell illegal drugs (including marijuana), but multiple new pot shops do.
- Denver, Colorado has more pot dispensaries than liquor stores or pharmacies.
- Marijuana has no set or controlled dose or strength, so buyers can’t know what they get.

ACTION – OPPOSE H.R. 36. Between now and January 8, 2018, ask the following House Non Civil Judiciary Committee to vote NO on H.R. 36 in the next session: Representatives Golick, Ch., 404 656-5943; Reeves, V-Ch., 656-0298; Gravley, Sec., 656-0152; Abrams, 656-5058; Ballinger, 656-5116; Boddie, 656-0109; Coomer, 656-5024; Cooper, 656-5069; Dickerson, 656-0314; Kendrick, 656-0116; Price, 656-0202; Quick, 656-0220; Setzler, 656-7857; Silcox, 656-0109; Strickland, 656-0298; Trammell, 656-0314; and Willard, 656-5125.

¹ Tourette’s syndrome, Autism, Epidermolysis bullosa, Alzheimer’s disease, AIDS, and Peripheral neuropathy, plus the 8 already qualified: Cancer, Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, seizures, MS, Crohn’s, Mitochondrial, Parkinson’s & sickle cell

² (a) Marijuana is a Schedule I federally controlled drug; writing prescriptions is illegal. (b) Doctors recommend patients to the Health Department that registers them and issues treatment cards. Since no prescription is used; the law is obeyed.

The Hemp/Marijuana Connection

2016 **H.B. 704** was introduced by Representative John Pezold April 2, 2015 to be held for action in the 2016 legislative session. It died, but would have legalized the cultivation of industrial hemp as a Georgia Department of Agriculture (DOA) pilot program. If it had passed, any individual, partnership, association, fiduciary, corporation, or organized group – whether or not incorporated – could have obtained a license to grow crops of industrial hemp. In addition, institutions of higher learning could have legally cultivated industrial hemp as research projects. Because H.B. 704 died in the House Judiciary Non Civil committee in 2016, Georgia does *not* have certified industrial hemp farms growing *Cannabis sativa L*, which is marijuana. The difference between *Cannabis sativa L* that produces marijuana and *Cannabis sativa L* that produces hemp is the tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) level in the plant.

Currently, there's no solution to that problem for these reasons: (a) No seed in the world can be guaranteed to produce a marijuana plant with only 0.3 percent THC. (b) No viable hemp seed has been documented or legally imported in decades.

2017 **H.B. 465 To Create an Industrial Hemp Commission** is one of four marijuana bills of 2017. Mimicking the handling of its 2016 predecessor H.B. 704, it was assigned to the House Judiciary Non Civil committee for action in 2018, when, hopefully, it will be defeated.

Six commission members would be appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor and Speaker of the House from Georgia farmers, businesses, and manufacturers interested in industrial hemp products. Certain state department heads, educational leaders, and law enforcement will be on the commission that's expected to attain this goal: *Move Georgia to the forefront of industrial hemp production, development, and commercialization in agribusiness, alternative fuels, and other business sectors, to the greatest extent possible, both nationally and globally.*

But there are major hindrances to growing hemp in Georgia. Examples: (a) Hemp marijuana is marijuana that has low THC, the hallucinogenic chemical that is the principal and most active ingredient in marijuana. (b) There is no certified marijuana seed to guarantee the three-tenths of one-percent or lower THC level required to produce hemp. (c) If high THC level marijuana is an inadvertent result from crops expected to produce marijuana with hemp-level THC, (d) the outcome could be acres of recreation-grade marijuana, instead of hemp-grade marijuana.

ACTION – OPPOSE H.B. 465. Between now and January 8, 2018, ask members of the House Non Civil Judiciary Committee to vote NO on H.B. 465 in the next session. Their names and numbers are provided on page 2.

“Industrial Hemp Now Growing in New York” was the September 13, 2016 headline, when the governor of New York signed a bill allowing industrial hemp to be cultivated, transported and sold for the first time in 80 years, as a “new economic opportunity for state farmers.” After New York became the 30th state to pass industrial hemp legislation, Morrisville State College and the JD Farms grow-site in Eaton, Madison County were both licensed for the pilot program.

Georgia Resolution Sent to State Congressional Delegates

H.R. 340 Urge Congress: Amend 1970 Controlled Substances Act to Study Marijuana that passed on March 30th, was sent to Georgia's federal congressional delegation. It urges a study of the benefits and potential medicinal value of marijuana, which remain unknown, and requests authorization for a state-sponsored physician/patient investigational research program to discover possible uses of marijuana and its derivatives.

Guns, Terrorism, & Alien Release-and-Dump

When Governor Deal vetoed last year's campus carry bill, he was concerned that firearms would have been allowed on preschool campuses or in disciplinary hearings or in administrative and faculty offices.

H.B. 280, this year's campus carry bill, alleviates the governor's concerns of 2016 and restricts firearms in even more sensitive places. Governor Deal explained his change-of-heart this way:

“While H.B. 280 addresses the rights and restrictions relating to weapons carry license holders on a college campus, it in effect may have greater significance for students who are going to or coming from a campus. Unfortunately, in parts of the state, the path to higher education travels through dangerous territory.... In recent years, we've witnessed college students fall victim to violent attacks in or while traveling to libraries and academic buildings, and while traveling to and from their homes to class.”

H.B. 280, also, prohibits the carrying of concealed weapons onto or into athletic events; student housing, dormitories, fraternities and sororities; preschools and childcare facilities; as well as rooms or spaces used by colleges, career academies or other special schools.

H.B. 292, signed four days after his signing of the campus carry bill, prevents providers of credit and financial services from discriminating against businesses, simply, because they are lawfully engaged in buying, selling, or manufacturing firearms or ammunition.

H.B. 452 actually passed with all of **S.B. 1** added to it. Anyone reading the original version of S.B. 1 on the General Assembly website will think S.B. 1 failed to pass, since that site does not explain the amendment of S.B. 1 onto H.B. 452. But both passed and become law on July 1st.

H.B. 452 will be an extremely important new law that requires online posting of data about aliens and others who are released from federal custody, then turned loose in the State of Georgia. It requires information about such releases to be publically posted in Georgia within 12 hours after the Georgia Information Sharing and Analysis Center is informed. Also, a copy of that data must be sent to the Georgia Sheriffs' Association.

The S.B. 1 attachment to H.B. 452 further protects Georgia against terrorism. (a) It strengthens the state homeland security and intelligence gathering efforts by creating a real-time method of communicating intelligence among local, state, and federal authorities, when there's a suspected terrorist threat or act.

(b) It tightens Georgia's definition of terrorism in all four major authorities directly engaged in combating terrorism. Those agencies already in place are the Georgia Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Defense of Georgia, the Intelligence Service of Georgia, and the Special State Protection Service of Georgia.

(c) It sets the starting point for identifying terrorism at one victim. That's a big improvement in current law that requires an incident to affect ten victims before it can be ID as terrorism.

(d) Also, it defines a domestic terrorist as anyone reasonably suspected to be, or has been, engaged in global or domestic conduct constituting, preparing for, or aiding in an act related to terrorism.

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