

# IDAHO OFFICE OF DRUG POLICY



November 2018

  
*Gabapentin: An Emerging Drug Trend*  
*Law Enforcement Grant Opportunity*  
*Sticker Shock Campaign*  
*DEA National Take Back Day Results*  
*Deterra Pouches Distributed to Idaho Pharmacies*  
*Idaho Out-Of-School Network Survey*

## Gabapentin: An Emerging Drug Trend

### Relatively safe, but a potentiator for other drugs

Gabapentin is a purportedly nonaddictive nerve pain medication and anti-convulsant. It was introduced in 1993 and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of epilepsy. In 2004, the FDA approved the medication for the treatment of neuropathic pain. It is also commonly prescribed off-label. It is better known by brand names like Horizant, Gralise, or Neurontin.

Gabapentin is considered safe and effective on its own, but the concern arises because it is a potentiator which means when it interacts with other drugs in the body, it can increase their effects. When taken with an opioid, the user can experience greater impairment.

A study published in October of 2017 examined 1,256 cases of individuals who had died from opioid-related causes and compared them to living opioid users. The study found that a co-prescription of opioids and gabapentin was associated with a 50% increase in the risk of dying of opioid-related causes. ([Gomes et al., 2017](#)). The theory,

although not yet confirmed, is that gabapentin increases activation of the opioid receptor which then leads to increased respiratory depression and subsequent overdose.

In 2017, Kentucky became the first state to classify gabapentin as a controlled substance after it was found in a third of the state's fatal overdoses. At the same time, gabapentin has approval from the CDC as a non-opioid treatment for chronic pain, as many people safely and effectively use it.

Nationally, rates of gabapentin diversion increased from 0 cases in 2002 to .027 cases (per 100,000) in 2015, according to [Dr. Mance Buttram](#) of Nova Southeastern University. Researchers in rural Kentucky found that gabapentin abuse often begins with a legitimate medical concern or sharing among peers, but continues as a result of the pharmacodynamic effects (getting high), pain relief, and withdrawing from other substances such as cocaine, buprenorphine, and oxycodone ([Smith et al., 2018](#)).

Food and Drug Administration director Scott Gottlieb said the agency was concerned and is reviewing the misuse of gabapentin. He stated, "FDA is investigating whether their abuse or misuse is also increasing and, if so, what should be done to address the problem."

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## Law Enforcement Grant Opportunity

### Application Deadline is December 7, 2018

The Office of Drug Policy is pleased to announce the release of the Law Enforcement Partnership for Success Grant. The purpose of this grant is to prevent underage drinking, marijuana use, and methamphetamine use in Idaho through effective law enforcement techniques including interdiction activities, party patrols, shoulder tap operations, compliance checks, and community presentations. Between \$54,000 and \$74,000 is available in each region.

All law enforcement agencies including tribal, local, state, and federal agencies are encouraged to apply. Applicants will be made aware of funding decisions on December 10, 2018, and funding will extend through June 2019. Agencies will be asked to provide brief, online quarterly reports, and funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis through an online form. All staff time used for these activities must be overtime hours dedicated to prevention work, and all activities must be implemented within the applicant's respective jurisdiction.

To apply for this opportunity, click the link below:

## Sticker Shock Campaign

### Preventing underage drinking around the holidays

According to the Idaho Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 2017, 47% of underage drinkers reported **usually obtaining alcohol they drink by someone giving it to them**, which may include adults aged 21 and over purchasing it legally.

The Idaho Office of Drug Policy (ODP) has partnered with the Idaho Liquor Division (ISLD) to sponsor a joint project, funded through the Substance Abuse Block Grant, to implement the Statewide Sticker Shock Project. This effort is designed to reach adults who might furnish alcohol to minors, with the intention of raising awareness around underage drinking issues right before the December holidays.



Sticker Shock Campaign Flyer

Stickers, depicted above, which warn adults about the penalties for furnishing alcohol to minors, have been placed on bags supplied by ISLD. Beginning November 23, 2018 and until supplies run out, the bags will be distributed by state operated and contracted liquor stores in approximately 25-30 communities throughout Idaho. Signs and t-shirts are also displayed by participating retailers.

We invite you to get involved by downloading and sharing ODP's "Think Twice or Pay the Price" animated video from our Be the Parents underage drinking prevention campaign. Download the video [HERE](#) and upload it to your website or a social media post!

## DEA National Take Back Day Results

### Over one ton of prescription drugs collected in Idaho

The DEA held its 16th bi-annual National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on Saturday, October 27, 2018 from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm. For the DEA press release and link to full results [CLICK HERE](#). National and Idaho-specific results are summarized below:

## National

- Total Law Enforcement Participation: 4,770
- Total Collection Sites: 5,839
- Total Weight Collected: 914,236 lbs. (457.12 tons)

## Idaho

- Law Enforcement Participation: 26
- Collection Sites: 34
- Weight Collected: 3,269 lbs.



For permanent year-round take back locations in Idaho, visit <https://odp.idaho.gov/prescription-drug-take-back-program/> and search by zip code.

## Deterra Pouches Distributed to Idaho Pharmacies

### Prescription drug disposal made easy

In October, the Office of Drug Policy partnered with the Board of Pharmacy to distribute [Deterra Drug Deactivation System](#) pouches to Idaho pharmacies. Deterra pouches can be used to easily, and properly, dispose of unused medications in an environmentally friendly manner.

They work by simply placing unused medications into the bag and adding water; the carbon core within the bags renders the medications inert and the user can simply seal the bag and toss it in the trash. The Deterra pouches are



made from biodegradable materials that actively break down in the presence of microbes-ideal for the landfill. Medications, including opioids, stimulants, or other controlled substances in the form of pills, liquids, or patches can be disposed of in Detera pouches.

The Office of Drug Policy bought over 8,000 Detera pouches, and within an hour, all were ordered by local pharmacies and chains throughout the state. Thank you to Mike's Pharmacy in Idaho Falls, Dick's Pharmacy and KJ's Pharmacy in Twin Falls, Rite Aid in Meridian, Walgreens in Caldwell, and Albertson's statewide for your partnership in substance abuse prevention!

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## Idaho Out-Of-School Network Survey

For out-of-school providers working with middle school-aged children (grades 6-9)

The Idaho Out-of-School Network (ION) is conducting a statewide survey of out-of-school providers working with middle-school-aged children (grades 6-9). Based on what is learned from this survey, ION will be in position to address critical areas of Youth Development, Drug Abuse and Prevention, Workforce Development, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Learning and much more.

ION would appreciate if anyone who fits the criteria of out-of-school providers working with middle-school-aged children could take 20 minutes to fill out their survey. The survey is open until December 15th but if you complete it on or before November 30th you will be entered to win a \$100 gift card.

To access the survey, click the link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/IONMiddleSchoolSurvey>

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The Idaho Office of Drug Policy leads Idaho's substance abuse policy and prevention efforts by developing and implementing strategic action plans and collaborative partnerships to reduce drug use and related crime, thereby improving the health and safety of all Idahoans.



*We envision an Idaho free from the devastating social, health, and economic consequences of substance abuse.*





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