

Oregon 2007 drug-related deaths increase

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Oregon State Medical Examiner Dr. Karen Gunson released drug-related death statistics for 2007 reflecting a continuing rise since 1999 and the third highest number of these deaths since 1997. The statistics showed a sharp increase in Heroin-related deaths while Methamphetamine and Cocaine-related deaths dropped in comparison to last year's figures. "The jump in Heroin-related deaths is very alarming and the highest in that category for the last seven years," said Dr. Gunson. "There is nothing in these statistics to celebrate because drugs are taking the lives of many people including our family, friends, and neighbors." Statistics released by the State Medical Examiner indicate 231 people died in Oregon during 2007 either from Heroin, Cocaine, Methamphetamine, or a combination use of drugs. Following a significant drop in 2001, drug-related deaths continued to rise as the 2007 year statistics were an 8 percent increase for the second straight year increasing over last year's 213 recorded deaths. A closer look at the 231 drug-related deaths and the frequency of use in the total number of these deaths reflected: * Heroin use was related to 115 deaths, an increase of 29 percent from last year's 89 deaths and the highest number since 2000 in this category. * Methamphetamine use was related to 71 deaths, a decrease of 21 percent from last year's 90 deaths and the lowest number since 2002 in this category. * Cocaine use was related to 55 deaths, a decrease of 14 percent from last year's 64 deaths. * Combination of drug use was noted in 37 of the deaths, an increase of 18 percent from last year's 31 deaths. Some counties that showed noticeable increases or decreases include: * Multnomah County drug-related deaths increased from 95 (2006) to 111 (2007) * Jackson County drug-related deaths increased from 6 (2006) to 13 (2007) * Clackamas County drug-related deaths increased from 11 (2006) to 16 (2007) * Washington County drug-related deaths increased from 3 (2006) to 11 (2007) * Deschutes County drug-related deaths decreased from 6 (2006) to 2 (2007) * Lane County drug-related deaths decreased from 32 (2006) to 26 (2007) * Marion County drug-related deaths decreased from 20 (2006) to 15 (2007) Information for all counties that had at least one drug-related death is available in the 2007 report at http://www.oregon.gov/OSP/SME/docs/Drug_Related_Death_Report_2007.pdf.

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