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#1. Some of this may be true. However, it is a case by case basis. Many people addicted to drugs are able to kick the habit. Take a look at the most recent MS Drug Summit, Darryl Strawberry for instance was able to kick the habit. It depends on a person's will, determination and drive to want a better life. They must also be able to stay away from others who use in efforts to keep the temptation at bay.

Attempting to apply Keynesian economics to the disease of addiction is a flawed approach. While supply and demand factor into drug usage, the physical and psychological aspects of addiction tend to push users past normal limiting factors. Addicts will make purchases well beyond their financial means regardless of other economic needs and responsibilities. According to the United States Census Bureau, the estimated 2015 national household median income was \$55,775 per year; the median household income in Mississippi for the same time period was \$40,593. Compared to the median US household income, Mississippi median house income is \$15,182 lower. But yet users will spend greatly disproportionate amounts of this income on their substance of abuse.

It is this fact of substance abuse disorder that forces users to stop their use, seek help in quitting, switch to a cheaper drug or begin a life of crime to support their habit. For example, a person abusing Dilaudid at a rate of 8 pills a day will spend upwards of about +/- \$400 per day to support their habit. The high cost generally leads to the transition to other drugs such as heroin. According to American Society of Addiction Medicine, four of five new heroin users started from abusing pain killers.

We are seeing more people in Mississippi seeking help. For instance, in 2015 there 240 people treated for abusing heroin. In 2016, that number rose to 306 people treated for heroin abuse. These numbers are from the Mississippi Department of Mental Health Alcohol and Drugs Services. Also, as reported by MDMH the number of other opiate abusers dropped slightly from 2015 (977) to 2016 (956). Keep in mind that there was an increase in the number of people admitted for abusing heroin from 2015 to 2016.

On a nationwide level, a switch to more readily available medically assisted treatments and an increase in the amount of treatment beds available have been seen as major factors in addressing abusers that lack the economic resources to support their habit and desire to not enter a life of crime.

#2. I would have to agree with drugs playing a significant role in the crimes that are being committed in not just Mississippi, but across our nation.

#3. A successful reduction in the demand for drugs tends to be more a function of the education and treatment services components of governmental services. Drug enforcement, especially agencies such as MBN and DEA, tend to focus on attacking the supply side of the equation. As the opioid and heroin crisis has evolved, drug enforcement agencies have partnered with intervention and treatment based groups to share resources and formulate universal strategies to address the problem.

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With your first scenario, I can only give more concrete answers as it relates to the State of Mississippi. First, none of these drugs that are causing the biggest issues are manufactured or produced in this state. The drugs are being trafficked in from Mexico and other countries. This would be incumbent upon the federal government to control the influx of drugs into this country. However, MBN is committed to its mission and the citizens of Mississippi to continue efforts to disrupt and dismantle drug organizations that operate within our borders. In several of our cases, we are able to prosecute individuals in other states for their roles or activities committed in Mississippi.

Under our current agency directives, MBN does not arrest people for the crime of "addiction." Both the current direction of MBN investigations and the recent revamp of state law tend to funnel those that commit crimes because of substance abuse disorder into pre-trial and interventional programs such as drug courts and supervision. The single greatest weakness in preventing addicts from progressing down the path to true criminal acts is a shortage of available treatment programs and facilities.

The idea that Mississippi should incarcerate anyone that has used an illegal drug is flawed. Measures supported by MBN have sought to lessen mandatory sentences for users while insuring that the individuals that traffic large quantities of drugs and are responsible for the subsequent violence serve swift and certain prison time. While we agree that the supply of drugs may be virtually infinite, the supply of individuals that will risk lengthy prison sentences is limited.

No, we cannot arrest our way out of this problem. We have gone on record during town hall meetings and the very recent drug summit admitting that arresting users will not solve our drug addiction problem. But, the collaborative efforts of law enforcement and the medical community working together will make a difference. We have to provide treatment to those individuals who need treatment and incarcerate those major dealers. If we attack the drug problem from this avenue then we will reduce the demand by reducing the number of users and we will also reduce the supply by reducing the number of wholesalers within the state. Therefore, incarcerating people who are truly addicted is not the answer.

Scenario 2. This case holds true to what was stated above. We must seek these three things as it relates to drugs problems here in MS and that's education, early prevention, and treatment. Additional interaction and partnering with social services is another area that must be improved upon. Social services encounter numerous individuals when they make their home visits and etc... If they would report any and all suspicious drug activity to MBN then we could look into some of these situations and may be able to save the state some money as it relates to children becoming a part of the state system. However, it will require the combined effort of each group to work in a manner that will produce the greatest benefit for the state and its citizens.

To a large extent, proactive law enforcement efforts are about quality of life. Do we refuse to respond to a citizen that feels unsafe because of drug activity in their neighborhood because we believe we cannot improve the situation? One of the single greatest missions of public safety agencies is to do just that, make the public feel safe. We can discuss idea and theory ad nauseum, but none of this matters to

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the person that cannot enjoy their community because of criminal activity. They expect to see the agency they fund via taxes respond to their problem.

Again, the supply of drugs that are interdicted is a factor, but not the primary goal of MBN. Again, by targeting the key distributor and organizers in a specific geographical area, MBN can and does make major reductions in the availability of controlled substances. Using your analogy, Dollar General may indeed supplement the supply that is shoplifted. However, if the loss goes on for an extended period of time and sufficiently competent managers are unavailable, the corporation will shutter a store that is not profitable.

Indeed there does seem to be a revolving door of drug dealers that will replace those that are incarcerated. To combat this, we have to look towards education, mentoring programs, harsher sentencing/penalties for drug traffickers, and economic development for our state. If we are mentoring the children from the communities who see drug dealers on a daily basis as someone they look up to and want to be like. Then we are more likely to prevent them from becoming a victim or product of their community. Educating our youth and providing them with the necessary skills to make it in the real world outside of drug culture. But, the jobs have to be there and they have to see people who are doing the right thing and making a decent living by doing the right thing. If more people would see that drug traffickers are being dealt with and not just slapped on the wrist this would deter many of them from choosing a life and future in the drug culture. When juveniles are caught with drugs we need to start at that moment trying to monitor them and get them on track to being a productive citizen and not waiting until they are old enough to face significant incarceration. There needs to be some services for our youth to continue to educate them on the destruction that drugs cause, prevention programs in schools and communities, and a job market that carries the availability for people to work and be able to provide a decent living for their families. We have attempted to obtain records from the Mississippi Department of Education related to the number of students who were suspended for the past two years on drug related issues. We have no desire for the names of the students just the numbers. Information from other states such as Colorado revealed that during the 2015/2016 school year 58% of total expulsions were for marijuana use alone. This information was provided by the Colorado Department of Education to the Rocky Mountain HIDTA. MBN has attempted to obtain similar statistics from MDE the requests were rejected. This data would aid us in determining what impact drugs are having on our children and public schools.

#4. MBN agrees with the idea of sending users to prison is not a productive endeavor. Simply put, addiction is not a crime. Actions that occur while suffering from addiction may indeed be a crime. While a prison sentence for a robbery committed to support an addiction may not be what is best for the addict, the citizen that endured a violent act does have a right to expect punishment and a prevention of the same person committing the same act. It is the purview of our judiciary to make the determination what is in the best interest of justice.

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A majority of persons that are arrested and cannot make bond for 48 hours, do not have employment to lose. Indeed, someone in the throes of addiction may benefit from a time away from the people, places and things that lead them to addiction. Based upon personal experience, I have seen a great number of people that found an arrest to indeed be the catalyst for change.

Prisons have training programs to teach inmates new trades. Prisoners are also allowed to attend college while incarcerated. Many people have served their time and left prison with a college degree. Now they are better equipped to enter the work force. Many people before returning to society take part in a work release program where they have to find a job while living in a halfway house. To make it simple individuals have to want to do better. If a person doesn't desire to do better, they will continue to commit crimes. Re-entry programs and alternative sentencing programs are key to breaking this cycle.

Networking is something we all do daily. You must keep in mind that just as we in law enforcement network those that are a part of the criminal element will also network. The eighth amendment to the United States Constitution provides that we must insure incarceration is humane. Isolating individuals in a manner that would prevent them from meeting other criminals is not a valid idea. Again, socio-economic improvements must be implemented that incentivize post incarceration citizens to seek an alternate lifestyle and means of support rather than returning to their previous acts.

MBN is not in a position to address the availability of contraband within our penal institutes. We do believe that even in unionized states, you will find that the "higher" wage still places the prison employees well below the median income. We have greatly reduced the number of people incarcerated in our state, perhaps the next step is to make the time incarcerated much less enjoyable for those that are there. As you said, there are those that choose prison over outside supervision. This speaks to a fundamental flaw in our system of incarceration.

For the men and women of MBN the fight against the scourge of drugs is a battle to preserve and maintain the peace and dignity of our way of life.

#5. With the scenario you have laid out here there are several factors at play. These include socioeconomic issues, the lack of mentoring programs, early education on drugs and drug use, work training programs, and formal education. Most of these issues are a function of government outside MBN's mission and duties. I'm sure you are aware that some people do not have a desire to work and some are going to commit crimes no matter the alternative. This is readily apparent when you realize that the motivation for the foundations of the earliest societies was mutual protection from not just environmental factors, but other men. This issue transcends races and social groups. We have to continue to motivate our citizens towards the common good.

You asked: "If enforcement efforts cause the price of drugs to increase, that means the money and the money to buy guns also increases. How does that not lead to the problem of bad role models with 'a 9mm and a roll of \$100s' getting worse?" As long as law enforcement and the judicial system continues

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to do their jobs and such subjects are prosecuted to the fullest of the law, then that should be a deterrent for not just the person perpetrating the crime, but onlookers considering similar actions. The issues we are talking about need to be tackled from a collaborative front. Law enforcement alone cannot eliminate the state's or country's problems. To effectively handle this problem it is going to take an interdisciplinary approach. Do we throw our hands up and say forget a certain population? Do we throw our hands up and say let them do what they want to do? Do we throw our hands up and say let them kill themselves? Or do we say let them sell all of the drugs they want? No, because what they do has an effect on us directly and indirectly. For instance, a responsible citizen may shelter a child from the evils of the world. But when the child is faced with peer pressure and new opportunities to experiment, we often find the beginnings of addiction. Now, the actions of a narcotics dealer in another segment of the populace impacts your world. Likewise, when a person is assaulted and robbed by an addict to support a habit. These are members of our communities who have made good choices. They have been productive citizens. But none the less, they are now impacted by the scourge of drugs. Do we in the law enforcement community give up the fight because segments of our population do not fear the stigma of punishment? We are sworn to protect the peace and dignity of the citizens, just as legislators are to represent their constituents' best interest.

You asked: How are enforcement efforts going to make the problem of gangs go away when enforcement efforts increase the street price of drugs and thus the black market premium (profit) that gangs can make from selling drugs? Once again, to truly be effective this must be addressed by all stakeholders within our state. This includes law enforcement, corrections, the judicial system, mental health services and economic development groups.

One thing to keep in mind is the definition of gang. According to the dictionary by Farlex, gang is "a group of people who associate together or act as an organized body, esp for criminal or illegal purposes." With this being said, a gang can be considered everyone that was associated with Former Corrections Commissioner Epps. Those individuals acted in concert to commit criminal activity. The evolution of gangs leads to a diversification of enterprises and a reduction in the tendency to commit violent crimes. The majority of them have ventured into the enterprise of business. They are purchasing property and renting them for profit. They are also using some of the properties for illegal drug trade and as safe houses for members avoiding law enforcement. When drug proceeds are reduced, the gang groups do not disband and disappear. They focus on new crimes. Examples of this include the transition to kidnapping for profit in the Phoenix, AZ area that happened approximately 10 years ago as well as the more recent transition to robbing marijuana dispensaries in Colorado post decriminalization.

The gangs now that are committing your most violent acts are your local neighborhood groups. While traditional gangs such as the Vice Lords, Crips, Gangsters, or Inglewood City Royals still continue to present a threat, their focus has shifted to profit. The majority of violence associated with gangs now deals with individuals that feel "disrespected" and act out because of a perceived lack of opportunity within their community and social group.

You asked: "How do we keep having served prison time for drugs from being considered a badge of honor and a rite of passage into adulthood in some communities?" How do we shift the perception of a

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community? We must get others involved to educate and mentor. We must provide legitimate hope and opportunity. Allow them to see that individuals who commit certain crimes normally will not be able to obtain creditable jobs. Even athletes that commit certain crimes lose wealth and fame behind committing certain crimes. We have to insure that people from the communities you speak of have jobs that are attractive and available to them. But again, drug enforcement is only one part of the machinery that must make these types of changes.

We make prosecutable cases and protect society from the worst of the worst. MBN is also heavily involved in educating all segments of our citizenry about the dangers of narcotic use and abuse. With the limited resources we have, we are still reaching thousands of Mississippians per year. We can present the message and plant the seed. This is more so a mindset than anything. It will require the leadership of our elected officials and a common goal of all aspects of our government to see that these ideas take root and flourish.

#6. In reference to the scheduling of pseudoephedrine in House Bill 512, the purpose was not to eradicate methamphetamine from our state. The goal of that legislation was to reduce the number of clandestine methamphetamine laboratories and the subsequent environmental hazards, drug endangered children, explosions and respiratory hazards from inhaling dangerous gases during the manufacturing process. These labs put our first responders in dangerous situations while responding to and addressing meth labs. The Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics, supported by other law enforcement agencies, introduced legislation that was passed by the Mississippi House and Senate that classified products containing pseudo-ephedrine and ephedrine as a Schedule III controlled substance.

Since the passing of House Bill 512, Mississippi has seen a drastic decrease in the local manufacture of methamphetamine, active meth labs, meth dump sites, and chemical glassware seizures. Pseudoephedrine/ephedrine is the main ingredient in manufacturing methamphetamine. The idea behind this was to make it harder for meth cooks to obtain the main ingredient and illegal to possess without a prescription. House Bill 512 has had a dramatic impact in reducing clandestine lab seizures. This has resulted in increased safety for law enforcement as well as the citizens of our state.

Mississippi has experienced an influx of ICE (crystal form of methamphetamine). This has occurred for two reasons (1) the Mexican cartel stopped pushing Columbian cocaine across American borders and began shipping their meth (ICE) across. It was cheaper to produce and they were able to retain more of the profits. (2) People in Mississippi had a demand for meth since the legislation was passed to reduce the production of meth. Mexican cartel seized the opportunity to take advantage of the open market in Mississippi since it was hard for people to make their own meth. Organizations such as cartels prefer to operate covertly inside the United States and typically avoid violence if at all possible. MBN tended to see far more violence at homegrown methamphetamine labs than we do from out of state meth trafficking organizations.

#7. The only answer to that sir is education and treatment. There has to be some awareness of the dangers of all drugs given to the public. That can be accomplished through a drug public outreach

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program, town hall meetings and other reduction efforts. You are correct when you mentioned the increase of death rates when people switch from prescription drugs to illicit drugs. Some reasons for this are the potency of the illicit drugs compared to prescription drugs and marketing strategies of the drug dealers. What I mean by marketing strategies is that they cut their drugs with something else like fentanyl to make the drug they're selling more appealing to their clientele. We have found where a spice dealer was adding pesticides to the spice to make his product much better than his competitor's. We need to have a funding mechanism that will help provide adequate treatment for abusers who can't afford it to help them quit. Most addicts switch when their habit becomes too expensive to support or prescription drugs will no longer provide the high they are seeking.

Curtailing the transition from prescription opioids to heroin and synthetic opioids is an issue that MBN, along with our partners in the medical and treatment communities, has spent a great deal of time and effort addressing of late. The involved entities acknowledge that if the medical community were to stop prescribing opioids to chronic pain patients and push them to stop "cold turkey," that we would experience a much more significant rise in heroin abuse. The strategy that has been agreed upon on at the national level is one of a gradual reduction in opioids currently dispensed as well as creating far fewer new chronic opioid patients. Providers are beginning to wean patients down in dosage where practical and utilize medically assisted treatment where appropriate. Accompany this with greatly reducing the number of new chronic opioid dependent patients and the hope is that, over a course of several years, we will see a great reduction in opioid and subsequently heroin addiction. This will require additional treatment options and resources. At this time, the medical community is seeking to change the culture of prescribing by utilizing regulation. If this proves to be ineffective, it may require legislation to make the necessary changes.

#8. Does fault lie north, south or on the border? This is a chicken versus the egg question. Supply in this sense is not depended so much on the demand as it is a desire to obtain wealth and power. Yes demand for the drugs here in the U. S. play a significant role but it is not the only factor. Law enforcement north, south, and on the borders need to do their part, develop a networking system to relay intelligence one to another, and ensure that their integrity is never compromised. Remember, each law enforcement agency can only work their jurisdiction so we must communicate effectively and perform our duties diligently and without compromise then we should see some effects. If we keep playing the blame game then where would we be? Once again all of the issues revert back to this one thing. The fight against drug trafficking is not just an issue for drug enforcement agencies but every level of our society. The combination of local, state, federal and international resources have time and again shown to be the most effective manner in dealing with this scourge.

#9. The evolution of controlled substances into more potent forms is an ongoing battle. MBN experienced this issue with synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic stimulants and, now, opioids. On a national and state level, we have struggled to keep our laws up to date with chemical changes that are made not just to increase the potency, but skirt our scheduling lists. We face substances that kill our citizens via overdose that are not scheduled drugs. We are constantly asking for our state laws to be updated to cover the drugs we face. On a federal level, the administrator of DEA has emergency scheduling authority. Unfortunately, we encounter many of these substances in quantities that do not

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meet federal thresholds for prosecution. It simply boils down to the greed and desire of people to profit from others no matter what the cost or effect. These criminal organizations will try to find a way to skirt around laws or evade law enforcement efforts as much as possible.

We have indeed seen a rise in substances such as fentanyl, carfentanil and U-47700. The use of these substances falls far more on the supply side than the demand. Most addicts do not intentionally seek out these synthetics because of the danger they pose. This is evident by the facts that most fentanyl is not sold as such rather sold as heroin. The rise of counterfeit pharmaceuticals which contain fentanyl products is also evidence of drug organizations usage of fentanyl in a deceptive manner.

To keep our citizens safe from these incredibly potent synthetics, we must continue our enforcement efforts and partnerships with other agencies. We must also improve our dialogue with the public. When a batch of heroin or counterfeit pharmaceuticals are prevalent within a specific geographical area, we must communicate with treatment services, medical facilities and other stakeholders.

As stated earlier in this document, we must re-define our role in this crisis. Law enforcement must be willing to speak up and not remain in the shadows. As evidence with the feedback from the recent town hall meetings, the public is willing to engage in a conversation with drug enforcement. The leaders of our state must take advantage of the willingness of agencies from differing disciplines working together. We must fund a variety of efforts to include education and prevention, treatment and enforcement to truly address the plague of addiction. We must be willing to provide timely treatment to people suffering from substance abuse disorder, we must insure swift and sure prison sentences to the true drug trafficker and we must be willing to communicate with our citizens and engage them in alliances. The threat of addiction is far from only a criminal issue, it is a societal issue. It is a socio-economic battle. To a large extent, it is a fight for the identity of our populace. MBN and our partners stand ready to do our part. All we ask is that the necessary attention and resources be made available.