

Substance Abuse in Appalachia

Economic Overview of Appalachia

- Includes 50 counties in the state of Kentucky (ARC, 2004).
- Population is approximately 1,142,000 dispersed over 471 square miles (US Census, 2000).
- Once highly dependent on mining, heavy industry & agriculture, but now becoming increasingly reliant on jobs in the service industry, retail & government (ARC, 2004).

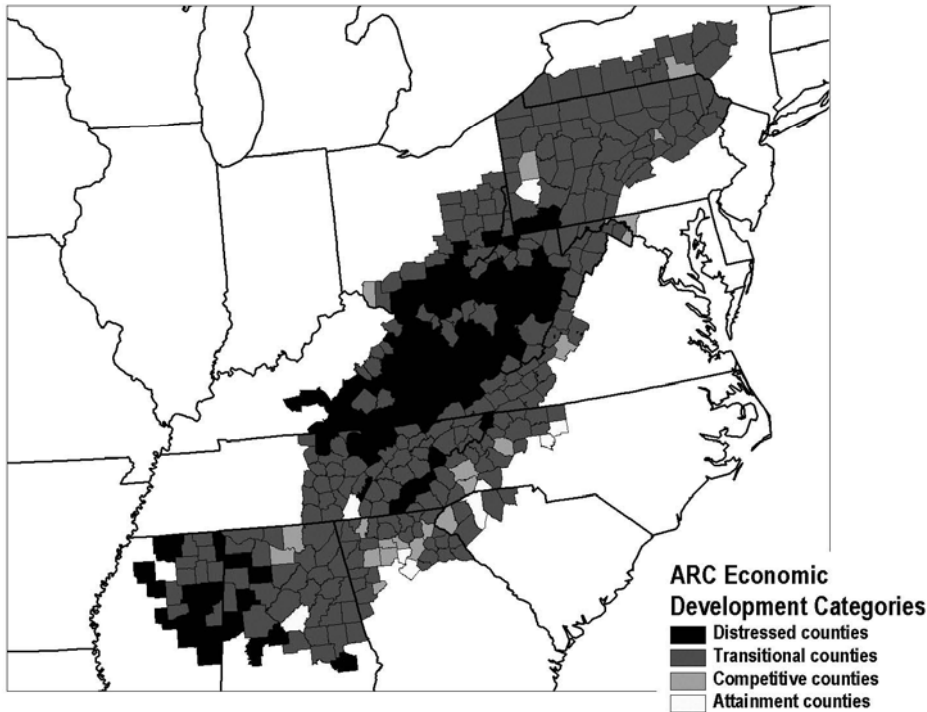
Economic Overview of Appalachia

- The Beale Code designation for this area is "9", which is the most rural and remote value within this typology (NRI, 2000).
- In 1965, 1/3 of Appalachians lived in poverty, but by 1990, the poverty rate had been cut in half (ARC, 2004).
- Nearly 40% of population lives below the federal poverty level, while 70% lives at or below the poverty level (NRI, 2000).

Economic Overview of Appalachia

Figure 2

Based on their levels of economic development, Appalachian counties can be classified into four categories.



Source: Appalachian Regional Commission, 2002.

Most of the counties in the mountains of Kentucky are considered economically distressed.

Economic Overview of Appalachia

- Only 62% of adults in this region have completed high school, compared to the statewide average of 74%, and a national average of 80.4% (US Census, 2000).
- As many as 40% of households do not have modern running water, 30% have no telephone, and nearly 20% are without a working vehicle (UK Center for Rural Health, 1997).
- Overall the Appalachian region experiences excesses in mortality relative to non-Appalachian areas (ARC, 2004).

Appalachians as a Minority Group

Characterized by:

- Significantly high rate poverty
- Substandard housing
- High unemployment rates
- Discriminatory attitudes about their culture
- Socially isolated
- Lack of Health Care

(ARC, 2004)

Appalachian Culture

- Egalitarianism
- Tradition of self-sufficiency
- Importance of family
- Neighborliness & Hospitality
- Fatalistic life attitudes
- General mistrust of outsiders

(Jones, 1994)

Drugs in Kentucky

- In 2000, three eastern counties, Clay, Laurel, & Martin, reported more DUI charges resulting from drugs than alcohol (DEA Fact Sheet, 2005).
- In 2003, 23% of persons in Kentucky's prisons were there for a drug offense (KY-ASAP, 2004).
- Many of those in prison for other crimes were on drugs or alcohol at the time of their offense (KY-ASAP, 2004).

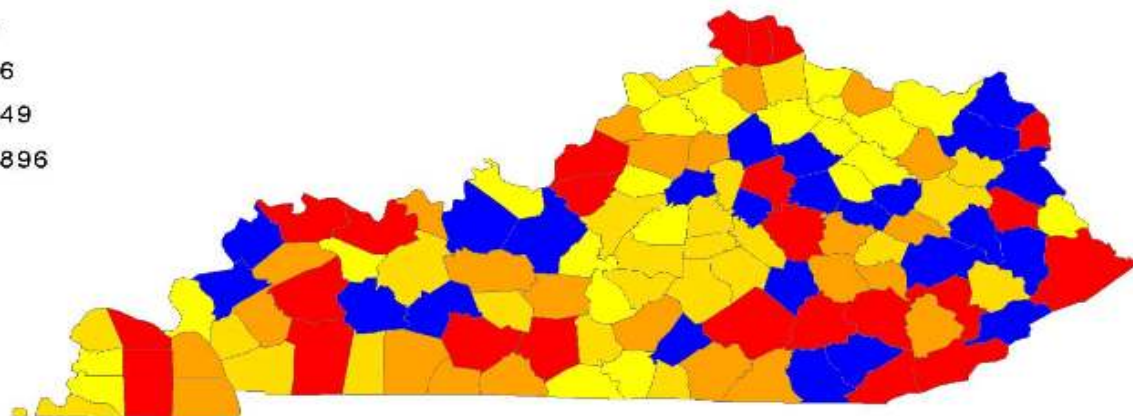
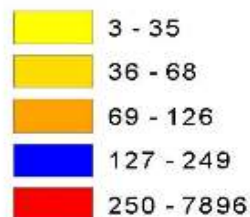
Drugs Seizures in Kentucky in 2004

(DEA Fact Sheet, 2005)

- **Marijuana: 429.9 kgs.**
- **Methamphetamine: 22.1 kgs.**
- **Methamphetamine Laboratories: 377**
(DEA, state, and local)

Controlled Substance and Related Drug Charges in Kentucky 2003

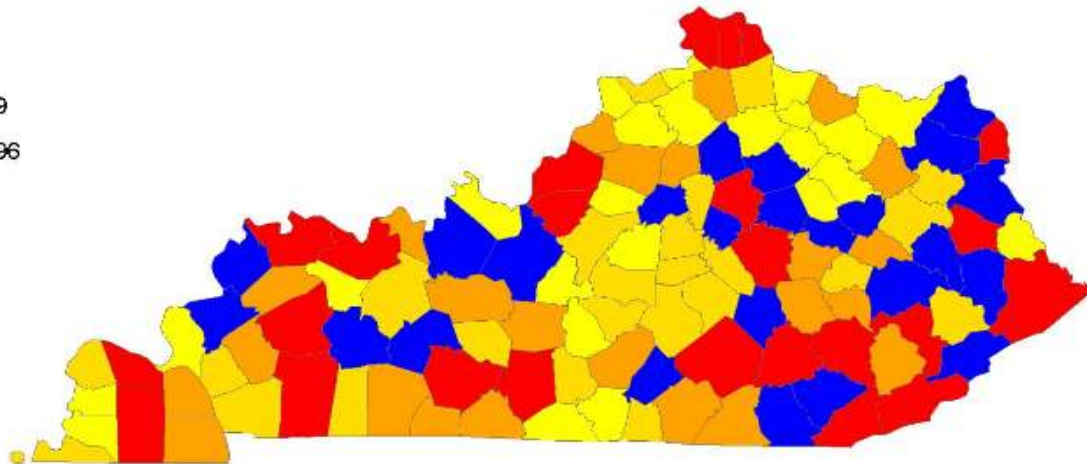
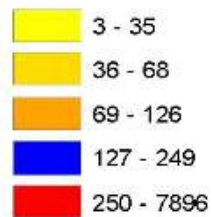
Frequency by Quintile Number of Charges per County



Source: Administrative Office of the Courts: 2/18/2003
Prepared by: Owen Johnson

Controlled Substance and Related Drug Charges in Kentucky 2001- 2003

Frequency by Quintile Number of Charges per County



Source: Administrative Office of the Courts: 2/18/2003
Prepared by: Owen Johnson

Drug Related Deaths in Kentucky

(ARC, 2004)

- There were 2,600 drug related deaths in Kentucky between 2000-2002.
- 1,300 of these deaths occurred in Appalachian counties.
- In other words, Appalachia is experiencing drug related deaths at four times the rate of the rest of the state.

Primary Drug Threats in Appalachia

- Marijuana
- OxyContin & Percocet
- Methamphetamine

Marijuana

(DEA Fact Sheet, 2005)

- Most widely available and frequently abused illicit drug in Kentucky.
- 50% of all drug treatment admission in Kentucky from 1998-2000 were marijuana related, more than any other drug.
- Kentucky's foremost cash crop, ranking third nationally in marijuana cultivation.
- Appalachia nicknamed the "Marijuana Belt", due to the ideal soil and climate conditions for cannabis cultivation.

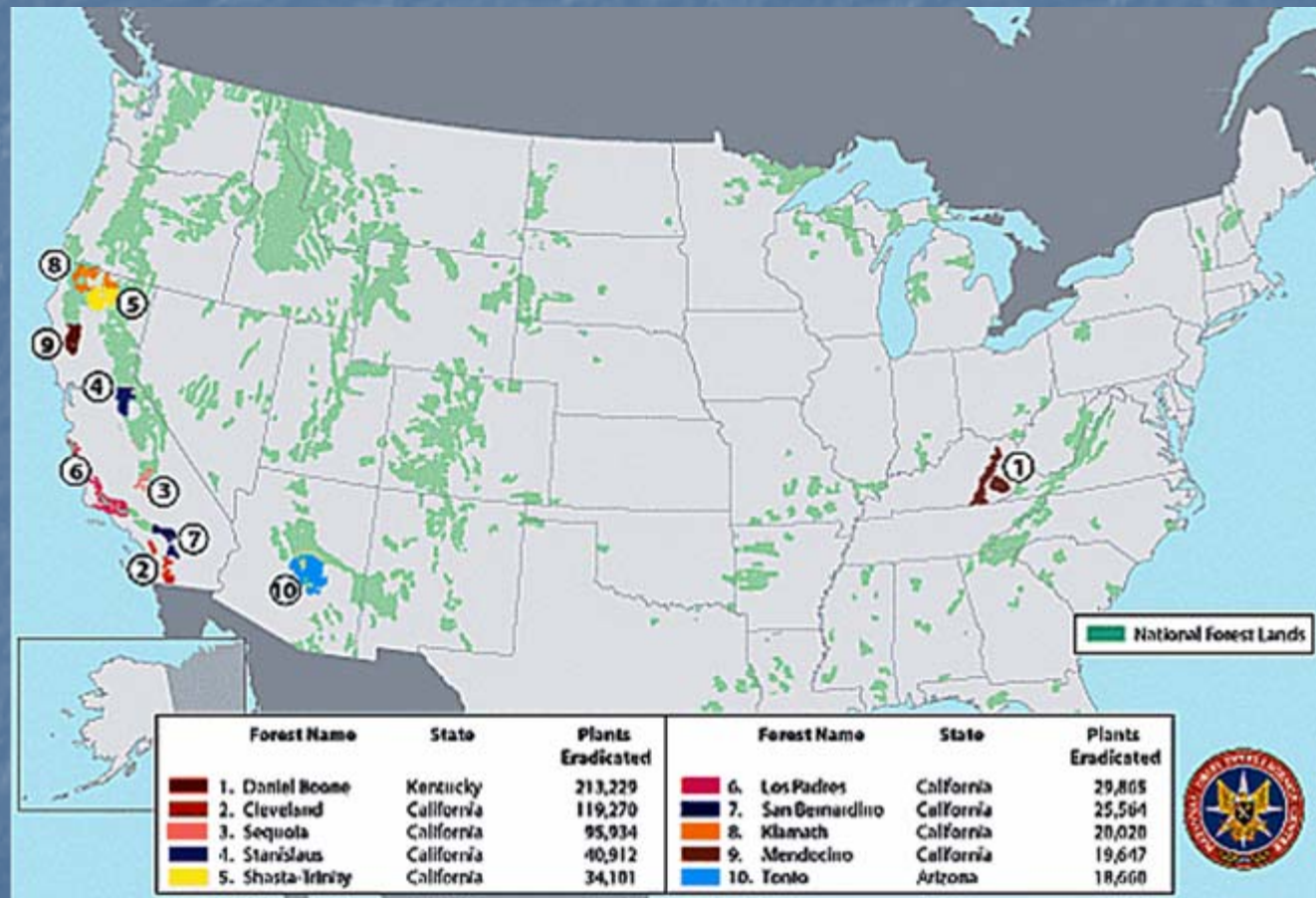
Marijuana Cultivation in the Daniel Boone National Forest

(DEA Fact Sheet, 2005)

- Eastern Kentucky has served as primary source of marijuana cultivation in the state, particularly in the Daniel Boone National Forest.
- Growers often plan crops on public lands to avoid asset forfeiture procedures if they are caught.

	Marijuana Plants Eradicated Statewide	Marijuana Plants Eradicated in the Daniel Boone National Forest
2002	378, 036	102, 288
2003	522, 957	213,229

Top Ten National Forests for Eradication of Marijuana on Forest Service Lands in 2003 (DEA Fact Sheet, 2005)



Kentucky's Daniel Boone National Forest has the highest in the number of eradicated marijuana plants on forest land nationwide.



Prescription Drugs

- Becoming the street drug of choice in many areas of Appalachia (ARC, 2004).
- Pharmaceutical drugs are abused within Appalachian areas substantially greater than the national average (DEA Fact Sheet, 2005).
- Eastern KY drugstores, hospitals, and other legal outlets received more prescription painkillers than anywhere else in the nation (ARC, 2004).

Prescription Drugs

	# of Seized Prescription Drugs (by dosage unit)
2002	8,719
2003	19,366

- Kentucky has the second highest hydrocodone distribution rate in the nation (DEA Fact Sheet, 2005).
- 5 Eastern Kentucky substance abuse centers were surveyed and reported a 288% increase in the number of narcotics abusers seeking treatment from 1998-2001 (DEA Fact Sheet, 2005).
- From 1998-2001, treatment for the abuse of prescription drugs accounted for 20% of all treatment admissions in the state (National Drug Intelligence Center, 2002).

OxyContin

- Kentucky ranks 13th in the nation in Oxycodone USE (DEA Fact Sheet, 2005).
- Currently the most serious pharmaceutical drug threat in Eastern Kentucky (DEA Fact Sheet, 2005).
- Eastern Kentucky ranks highest nationwide in OxyContin abuse (DEA: Pharmaceutical Diversion, 2002).
- OxyContin addiction is the root cause of a range of criminal activity in Eastern Kentucky such as robbery, theft, assault, and various types of prescription fraud (DEA Fact Sheet, 2005).

OxyContin

- The number of treatment admissions in Kentucky for abuse of oxycodone increased 163% from fiscal year 1998 through fiscal year 2000 (Brushy Fork Institute, 2004).

2001	OxyContin Related Admissions	Total Admissions	% of OxyContin Admissions
Cumberland River Comp Care	120	295	40%
Mountain Comp Care Center	204	237	86%

(DEA: Pharmaceutical Diversion, 2002)

OxyContin Route to Kentucky



Authorities say abusers and sellers of OxyContin have resorted to an elaborate scheme to bring the drug to Eastern Kentucky. Residents of Eastern Kentucky are leaving to fill prescriptions in surrounding states and then return to sell the pills. Others from neighboring states travel into Eastern Kentucky to sell the drug (Cincinnati Enquirer, 2001).

OxyContin Related Deaths

(National Drug Intelligence Center, 2002)

- Oxycontin related deaths in Kentucky have increased significantly since 1998.
- From January 2000 – May 2001, the KY State Medical Examiner's Office identified the presence of oxycodone in 69 deaths, with oxycodone levels toxic in 36 of those deaths.
- In 2000, the Pike County Coroner recorded 19 Oxycontin-related overdose deaths.
- 7 Oxycontin related deaths were reported in Southeastern Kentucky in December 2000 alone.

Reasons for Prescription Drug Abuse

(National Drug Intelligence Center, 2002)

- Appalachian economy still heavily dependent on coal mining.
- Miners spend hours each day painfully crouched in narrow mine shafts.
- Painkillers are often dispensed by coal mine camp doctors in an attempt to keep the miners working.
- Self-medicating became a way of life for miners, often leading to abuse and addiction.

Reasons for Prescription Drug Abuse

- High rates of occupational injury among available jobs in the region lead to high usage of alcohol and pain medication, increase social acceptability of substance abuse to treat pain and anxiety, and blur the lines between substance use and abuse (CASAP, 2002).
- Kentucky's death rate from Cancer is the fourth-highest nationwide, for which OxyContin is the most effective pain management drug (NCI, 1997).

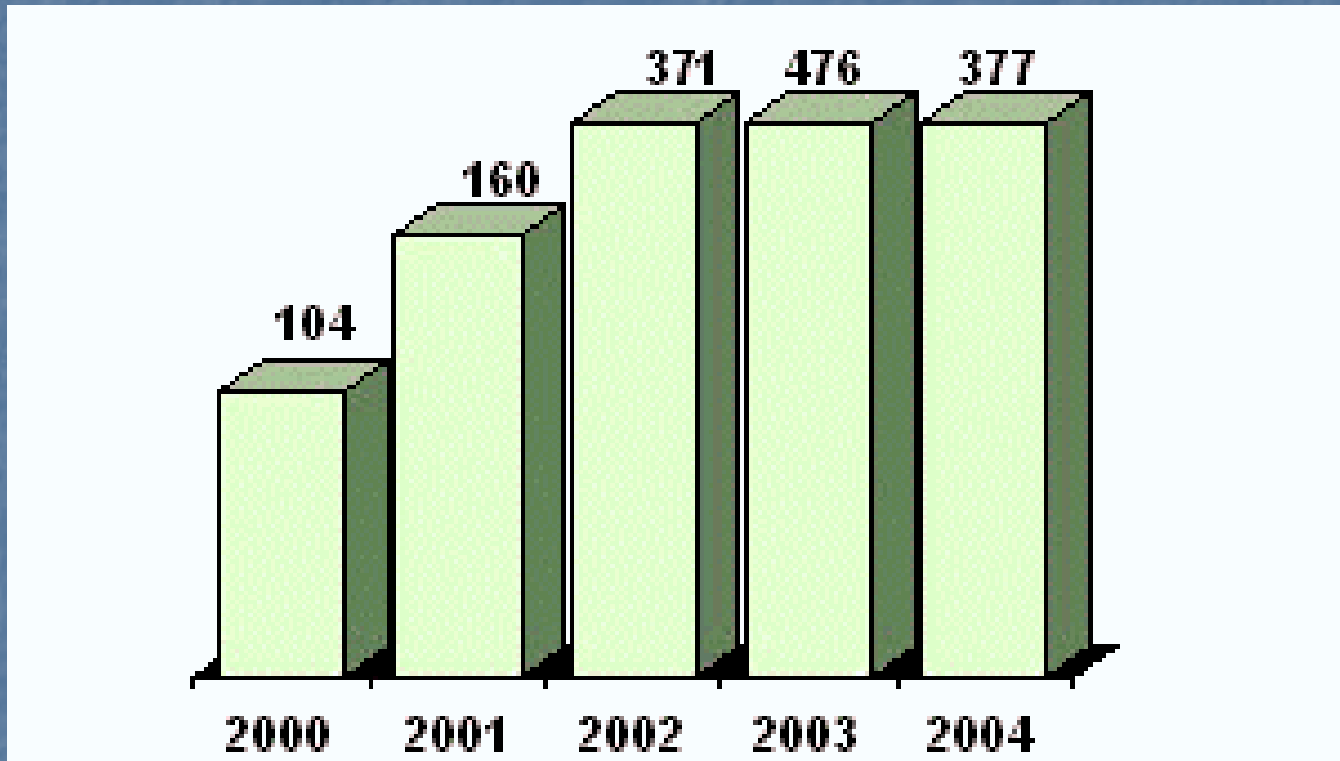
Reasons for Abuse of Prescription Drugs

- The inherent cultural characteristic of Appalachian hospitality leads to sharing of prescription drugs; the desire to help a neighbor in pain (Keefe, 1988).
- Very little stigma associated with prescription drug use (DEA Fact Sheet, 2005).

Methamphetamine

- Most rapidly emerging threat to rural areas of Kentucky (Brushy Fork Institute, 2004).
- Methamphetamine related drug treatment admissions in Kentucky has increased by 42% from 1998 – 2000 (DEA Fact Sheet, 2005).
- Production of this drug is a simple process dominated in the lower socioeconomic classes, including former marijuana cultivators (DEA Fact Sheet, 2005).
- Marijuana growers are beginning to realize the greater profit margin and diminished threat from law enforcement posed by methamphetamine production versus marijuana cultivation (DEA Fact Sheet, 2005).

Methamphetamine Labs in KY



DEA Fact Sheet, 2002

The number of seized methamphetamine labs in Kentucky has increased rapidly since 2000.

Treatment Obstacles

- Appalachian culture values independence and a reliance on family and devalues accepting help from the outside, including substance abuse treatment (CASAP, 2002).
- More than 18% of residents have no health insurance, while 35% are eligible for Medicaid (UK Center for Rural Health, 1997).

Treatment Obstacles

- Tradition of self-sufficiency and pride
- Lack of transportation
- Unsafe and inadequate housing
- Lack of child care
- Fatalistic life attitudes
- Lack of adequate treatment centers

(Health Recovery Systems, Inc., 2002)

Treatment Obstacles

- Fear of the system
- General mistrust of others
- Geographic social isolation
- Inability to afford health services
- Family Violence
- Low self-esteem

(Health Recovery Systems, Inc., 2002)