



SUBOXONE

*I/A Kari Sams
Appalachia HIDTA ISC*

SUBOXONE SELLING ON STREET FOR \$7 TO \$40 A PILL IN PARTS OF KENTUCKY

BACKGROUND

The National Drug Intelligence Center reported in 2004 that the most commonly used drug in opiate addiction therapy in the United States was methadone, a Schedule II synthetic opiate¹. However, there were several disadvantages to this method of therapy. Methadone was only prescribed in licensed methadone treatment clinics and patients had to make daily trips to the clinic in order to obtain the medication(s).

Previously, in 2000, Congress had passed what was known as the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 (DATA) that gave physicians that ability to treat opiate addiction in their offices with Schedule III, IV, and V medications approved by the FDA. At the time of DATA, there were no approved medications for that purpose. Yet, in 2002, the FDA approved buprenorphine for use in opiate therapy. Suboxone (a combination of buprenorphine and naloxone) was used for the maintenance stage of therapy for those addicted to opiates, and can be used to treat addiction of opiates,

including oxycodones such as OxyContin and Percocet.

SUBOXONE IN KENTUCKY

Current reports from LEAs in Kentucky indicate that Suboxone is being sold on the streets for anywhere from \$7 to \$40 a pill, depending on location.

Price ranges for Suboxone are varied throughout the state. Middlesboro Law Enforcement are seeing prices around \$7 to \$8 a pill. Whereas, in areas such as Pulaski, Wayne, and McCreary Counties LEAs seeing the drug going for as much as \$20–40 a pill regularly. Many UNITE counties are seeing prices in the range of \$20-30 a pill, and most recently prices in the \$30 a pill range in Harlan County. Search warrants in these counties are producing several Suboxone in homes. Other areas in Kentucky report not seeing it sold on the streets as of now, but anticipate seeing it soon, as reports from CI's are indicating that it is a drug many people are wanting.

USE AND/OR ABUSE

Reports from enforcement have illustrated that the drug is being used in a variety of ways. Some reports indicate the drug being taken with excess amounts of water to induce regurgitation to produce a high, snorting, using needles, as well as mixing it with Xanax when snorting to produce an incredible high for those who are abusing the drug.



SUBOXONE was the first opioid medication approved under DATA 2000.

The naloxone in SUBOXONE is used to discourage people from dissolving the tablet and injecting it. When it is placed under the tongue, very little naloxone reaches the bloodstream. However, if naloxone is injected, it can cause a person dependent on a full opioid agonist to quickly go into withdrawal.

For more information on Suboxone, check online at:

<http://www.suboxone.com>

1: NDIC. Buprenorphine: Potential for Abuse. <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs10/10123/index.htm>.