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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 20, 2014

PRESS RELEASE

Edwardsville—In response to a string of recent heroin overdose deaths and the continuing epidemic of heroin addiction in Madison County, Sheriff Bob Hertz and State's Attorney Tom Gibbons today announced the formation of a Task Force to study the effectiveness of past efforts to fight the problem, assess the current status of the problem in the County and develop a future Plan of Action to help reduce addiction and save lives.

“Heroin is a drug problem unlike any other we have ever faced, and we all recognize that we can't arrest our way out of it,” said Sheriff Bob Hertz. “After three years of working hard fighting against the damage caused by heroin addiction, recent tragic deaths prove that there is still much work to be done. We are calling on our many community partners who have worked with us over these years to come together to share information in order to find new, innovative, and more effective ways for us to combat this problem that has plagued our community. We must be committed to a multi-faceted approach that will be driven by the findings of the Task Force.”

A task force organizational meeting has been scheduled for February 27th, with the first public information session to be held on March 7th at 1:00 p.m. in the Madison County Board Room in Edwardsville. Among those initially being asked to join the Task Force are Coroner Steve Nonn, U.S. Attorney Steve Wigginton, local police chiefs, addiction treatment providers, representatives from the Madison County Probation and Drug Court, local healthcare providers, and representatives from federal law enforcement agencies. Sheriff Hertz indicated that he and Gibbons have already extended invitations to many prospective members and will continue to do so over the next day or two. Gibbons confirmed that others may also be added along the way.

Gibbons noted that the response has been overwhelmingly positive. “I am looking forward to bringing together individuals from a diverse group that will help us develop the best available intelligence about the heroin problem and develop a realistic Plan of Action with concrete steps that can be taken to help solve the epidemic that is poisoning our community and ruining many young lives.”

“We're ready to roll up our sleeves and get right to work on this new effort to combat the evils of drug addiction, and with meetings beginning next week, we look forward to having a concrete plan of action by the spring,” stated Hertz.

In 2011, Gibbons and Wigginton announced a new Federal and Local initiative designed to combat the rising heroin epidemic in the Metro-East. This created a team of local and federal law

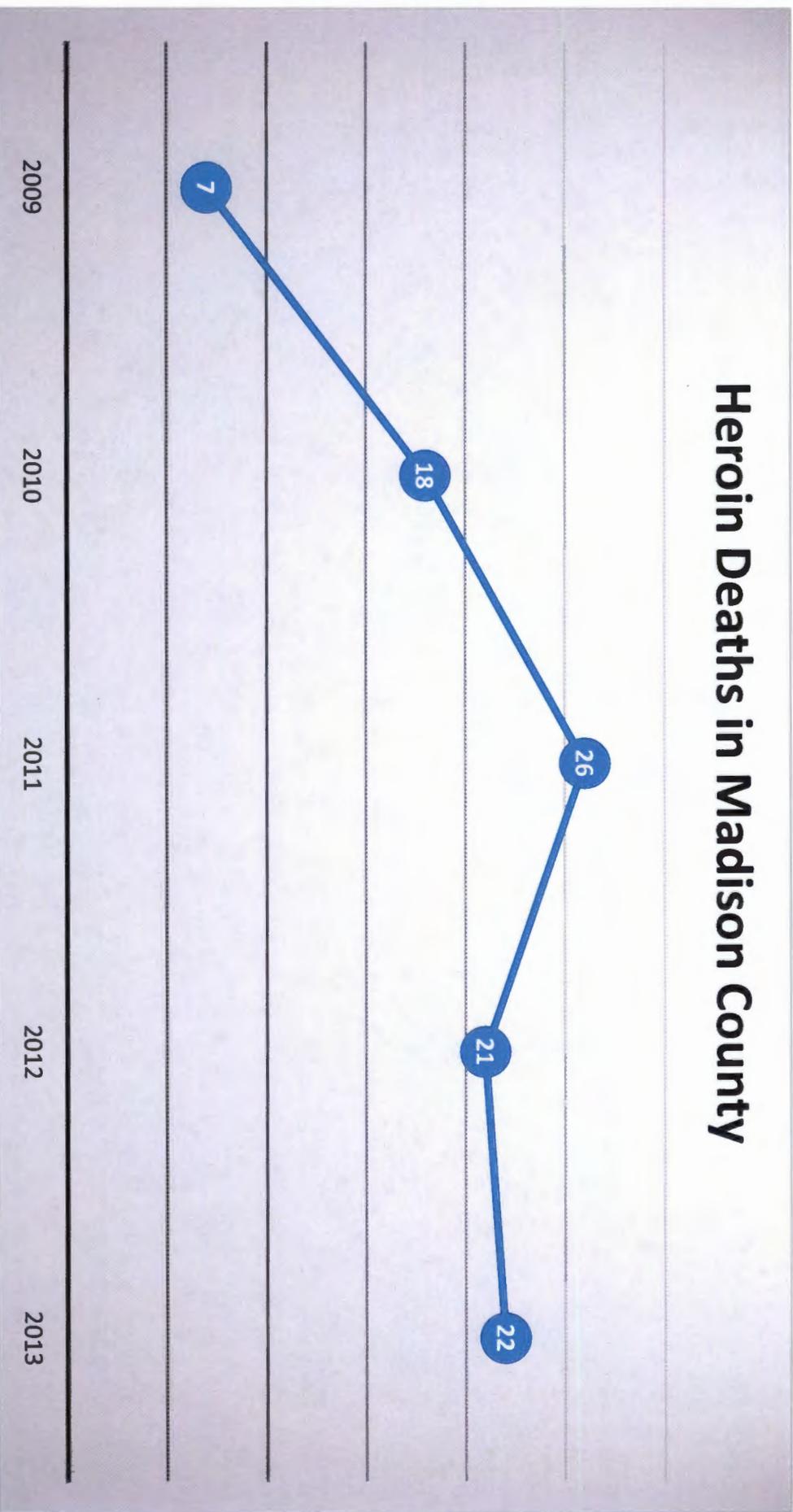
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enforcement agencies, coroners and prosecutors pooling their efforts and resources to prosecute individuals responsible for distributing illegal drugs that result in death or great bodily harm. Local leaders have also been very pro-active in their effort to keep the public's focus on this ongoing problem. This emphasis on community outreach has involved meeting regularly with community groups and schools about the heroin epidemic. For example, Gibbons, Hertz and other officials worked closely with the Edwardsville School District in creating the **Project DrugSMART** drug abuse prevention campaign in Madison County. The goal of **Project DrugSMART** is to create a safe and drug-free environment in schools through student support, deterrence, education and awareness.

In 2012, State's Attorney Gibbons also joined the national campaign known as **Lock Your Meds** that encourages adults to closely monitor prescription and over-the-counter medications to keep them out of the hands of teens and young adults. This public awareness campaign has been held in conjunction with Drug Free Coalitions of Madison County and the Drug Enforcement Agency's National Take Back Day where residents drop off unused or expired prescriptions. The County's collection site, held in conjunction with Sheriff Hertz and Coroner Nonn, has collected hundreds of pounds of prescription medications. Last October's event saw over 647,000 pounds of medication collection nationwide. The next Take-Back Day is scheduled for April 26, 2014.

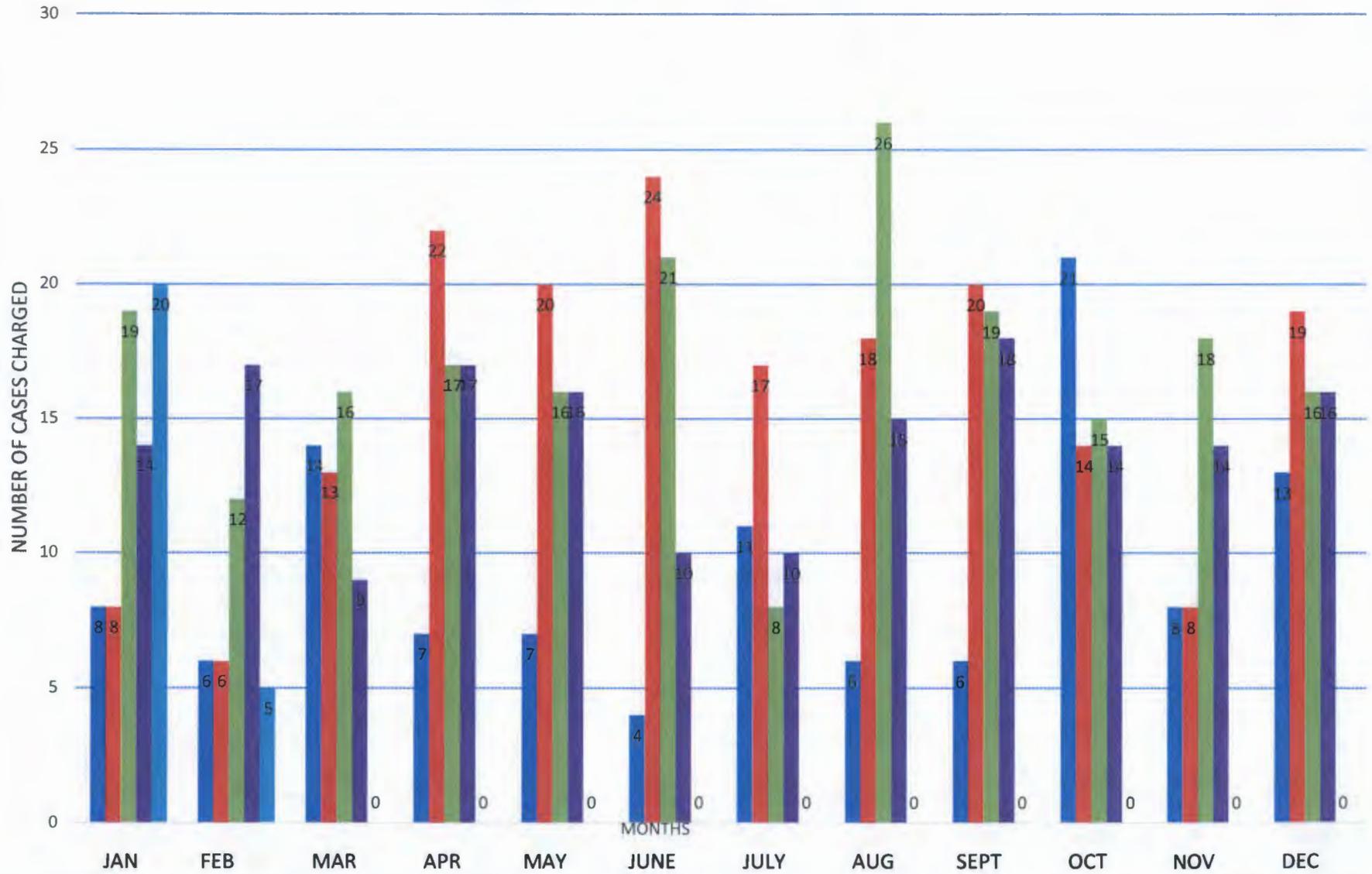
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Heroin Deaths in Madison County



Heroin Charges Year Trend

■ 2010 ■ 2011 ■ 2012 ■ 2013 ■ 2014

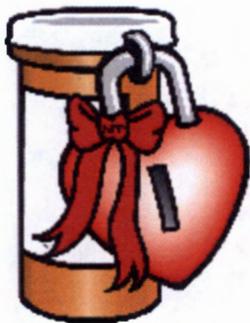


National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day

Saturday, April 26, 2014
10:00 a.m. — 2:00 p.m.

Drop off your unused or expired prescription or over-the-counter medications at the DEA Take-Back Day on Saturday, April 26, 2014.

Disposal bins will be located in the parking lot behind the County Administration Building, 157 N. Main St., Edwardsville.



**LOCK
YOUR
MEDS.**

**FREE lock boxes to
safely store meds to
first 25 drop-offs!**

Sponsored by State's Attorney Tom Gibbons,
Sheriff Bob Hertz, Coroner Steve Nonn,
Drug Free Coalitions of Madison County and
the U.S. DEA.

For more information, visit www.madco-sa.org.

70%

of people 12 and older who abuse prescription drugs get them from family or friends.

Every day, more than 4,000 kids try prescription pills for the first time

Prescription drugs are the **#1 choice** among 12-13 year olds.

Most heroin users don't start with heroin -- they start with prescription pills.

Lock Your Meds is about awareness and opening people's eyes to the fact that legal drugs can be just as dangerous as the drugs people buy on the street. Adults need to make sure that they are not becoming accidental dealers by allowing their medications to end up fueling an addiction or even killing someone.

A message from Madison County State's Attorney Tom Gibbons, Coroner Steve Nonn and the Drug Free Coalitions of Madison County

She gets her hair from her mom.

Her eyes from her dad.

And her drugs from her grandma's medicine cabinet.

BE AWARE. DON'T SHARE.™

For more information, go to www.lockyourmeds.org



For more information about upcoming Lock Your Meds events, downloads, and prescription drug takeback locations visit <http://www.madco-sa.org>.