



## **The Problem**

The illegal sale and abuse of heroin, prescription opiates (i.e., OxyContin, Vicodin, Codeine, Morphine, Methadone, Dilaudid and Fentanyl) and other illicit drugs such as methamphetamine are increasing in Marathon County. The Marathon County Alcohol and Other Drugs Partnership Council began discussing this issue in mid-2012 with its many partners and is mobilizing short-term action teams to assist in resolving the issue. The Council wants to raise awareness about the scope of illicit drug use in Marathon County, especially heroin and other opiates, and to inspire widespread community involvement and actions that will help Prevent, Enforce and Treat drug abuse. The Council believes:

- The abuse of heroin, opiates and other illicit drugs is a threat to public health and safety.
- Funding for prevention, treatment and enforcement is critical.
- All of us are impacted, and each one of us plays a part in the solution — not just law enforcement.

## **Why should you care and why now?**

The consequences of not addressing drug abuse issues can affect all citizens' safety, health and financial wellbeing. Specifically, without mobilizing our communities in this effort to reduce drug abuse, Marathon County is likely to experience:

- Increased criminal activity in the form of aggravated assaults, burglaries, armed robberies, thefts, prostitution, fraud and counterfeiting, impaired driving and other crimes.
- Increased strain on emergency health care services and other county health resources.
- Lower property values. Increased risk of Hepatitis C and other disease.
- Increased injuries and deaths from overdoses.
- A decline in economic development and employee recruiting due to undesirable effects of drug abuse.
- Decrease in employee productivity. Increase in health care costs. Increase in domestic and child abuse.
- Increased costs of enforcement, prosecution and incarceration.
- Longer waiting lists for substance abuse counseling.
- And other negative consequences.

## **How do we solve this problem?**

The Marathon County AOD Partnership Council believes countywide support of the following recommendations can help reduce illicit drug use and abuse:

1. Raise awareness about the level of heroin/opiate and other drug abuse in Marathon County.
2. Engage neighborhoods and citizens in efforts to recognize and report suspicious drug activities to law enforcement.
3. Get schools involved with increasing awareness of the consequences of drug abuse among high school students — refreshing the messaging our students received as elementary students through DARE?
4. Explore ways to reduce sales, purchases and usage of heroin and other illegal drugs in Marathon County.
5. Educate abusers and their families and friends about effective treatment options in Marathon County.
6. Encourage and sustain adequate funding for the prevention, enforcement and treatment of drug abuse in Marathon County.

**Prevention. Treatment. Enforcement**