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Assessing Illinois' Metropolitan Enforcement Groups and Task Forces



A Profile of the Quad-Cities Metropolitan Enforcement Group

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CONTENTS

Section	Page Number
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
I.	Introduction..... 1
II.	Trends in Violent Index Offenses and Arrests..... 3
III.	Trends in Drug Arrests 6
IV.	Trends in Drug Seizures 14
V.	Trends in Prosecutions for Drug Offenses..... 16
VI.	Trends in Percent of Convicted Drug Offenders Sentenced to Prison..... 18
VII.	Trends in Drug Treatment Admissions in QCMEG Region, by Drug Type 23
VIII.	Trends in Substance-Exposed Infants 26
IX.	Summary of Drug Situation 27
X.	Appendices..... 29
	Map 1 2002 Percent of Illinois' County-level Population Covered by an Authority-funded Metropolitan Enforcement Group or Task Force..... 30
	Map 2 2002 Illinois Cannabis Seizure Rates, by County 31
	Map 3 2002 Illinois Cocaine Seizure Rates, by County 32
	Map 4 2002 Illinois Crack Seizure Rates, by County 33
	Map 5 2002 Illinois Methamphetamine Seizure Rates, by County 34
	Map 6 2002 Illinois Heroin Seizure Rates, by County 35
XI.	Bibliography 36

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page Number
Figure 1.	Violent Index Offense Rates for Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by QCMEG 3
Figure 2.	2002 Violent Index Offenses* Reported by Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by QCMEG 4
Figure 3.	Violent Index Arrest Rates for Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by QCMEG 5
Figure 4.	2002 Violent Index Arrests* Reported by Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by QCMEG 5
Figure 5.	Total Drug Arrest Rates for QCMEG and Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by QCMEG 7
Figure 6.	2002 Drug Arrests* Reported by Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by QCMEG 7
Figure 7.	Total 2002 Drug Arrests* Reported by Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by QCMEG, by Drug Type..... 8
Figure 8.	Drug Arrests by QCMEG 9
Figure 9.	Percent of Total Drug Arrests Accounted for by QCMEG 9
Figure 10.	Cannabis Arrests Rates in the Region Covered by QCMEG as Reported by Participating Agencies, Non-participating Agencies, and QCMEG 10
Figure 11.	Percent of Cannabis Arrests Accounted for by QCMEG 11
Figure 12.	Controlled Substances Arrest Rates in the Region Covered by QCMEG as Reported by Participating Agencies, Non-participating Agencies, and QCMEG 12

Figure 13.	Percent of Controlled Substances Arrests Accounted for by QCMEG.....	13
Figure 14.	QCMEG Drug Arrests for Possession versus Delivery, by Drug Type.....	13
Figure 15.	Cannabis Seized and Submitted to ISP by Rock Island County and Seized by QCMEG	14
Figure 16.	Powder and Crack Cocaine Seized and Submitted to ISP by Rock Island County and Seized by QCMEG	15
Figure 17.	Number of Felony Filings in Rock Island County.....	16
Figure 18.	Total QCMEG Drug Arrests and Percentage of Arrests Resulting in Prosecution.....	17
Figure 19.	Sentences Imposed on Felons Convicted in Rock Island County.....	18
Figure 20.	Sentences Imposed on Convicted QCMEG Drug Offenders.....	19
Figure 21.	Number of Drug Offenders Committed to IDOC by QCMEG and Region Covered by QCMEG	20
Figure 22.	Drug Offenders as a Percent of Total IDOC Commitments from Rock Island County.....	21
Figure 23.	Drug Offenders Committed to IDOC from Rock Island County, by Offense Class.....	22
Figure 24.	Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions from Rock Island County	23
Figure 25.	Comparison of Drug Arrests by QCMEG and Participating and Non-participating Agencies vs. Drug Abuse Treatment Admissions in Rock Island County, 2002	25
Figure 26.	Cases of Substance-Exposed Infants in Rock Island County	26
Figure 27.	Availability of Drugs in Illinois, 2000.....	27
Figure 28.	Price Per Gram in Illinois, 2000	28

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1989, the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit has received funds under the federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 to document the extent and nature of drug and violent crime in Illinois and the criminal justice system's response to these offenses. As a result of these efforts, the Authority has amassed a large amount of data measuring the extent and nature of drug and violent crime in Illinois and the impact these crimes have had on the criminal justice system. In addition, as part of its monitoring and evaluation efforts, the Authority also requires funded programs to submit monthly data reports describing their activities and accomplishments. This profile is intended to provide a general overview of the drug and violent crime problem in the jurisdictions covered by Illinois' MEGs and task forces, and the response to these problems by the units.

Although the data presented in this report are by no means inclusive of all indicators, they do provide a general overview of drug and violent crime and the response and impact of the criminal justice system. The following represent general conclusions that can be made based on the data analyzed for this report.

- In 2002, four local Illinois police agencies participated in QCMEG (a participating agency is defined as one that contributes either personnel or financial resources to QCMEG). Eleven officers total were assigned to QCMEG in 2002. The four officers assigned to QCMEG from participating agencies comprised 1 percent of the total number of sworn police officers working for agencies participating in QCMEG (page 1).
- The violent Index offense and arrest rates were collectively higher across jurisdictions participating in QCMEG than among the combined jurisdictions that did not participate in QCMEG (page 3).
- The drug arrest rate tended to be higher in those jurisdictions participating in QCMEG than in those jurisdictions not participating. Although the drug arrest rate for QCMEG was significantly lower than the rate experienced by both the participating and non-participating agencies, between 1993 and 2002, QCMEG accounted for 21 percent of the arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act and Controlled Substances Act, with just 11 officers, compared to all of the participating agencies combined (pages 6 and 7).
- When comparing the types of drug offenders arrested by those agencies participating in QCMEG, those agencies not participating, and QCMEG, it was found that QCMEG tended to target and arrest more serious drug law violators, specifically violators of the Controlled Substances Act, which tend to be felony-level offenses (page 9).
- The majority of all drug arrests reported by QCMEG, for either violations of the Cannabis Control Act or the Controlled Substances Act, involve drug sale or delivery (page 14).
- Between 1993 and 2002, the amount of cannabis seized by QCMEG decreased by 30 percent, while the amount of cocaine seized during this time increased by 77 percent (pages 15 and 16).
- Between 1991 and 2002, the 98 percent of all drug arrests by QCMEG resulted in prosecution. Of these QCMEG drug offender prosecutions, 62 percent were for violations of

Controlled Substances Act. In addition, between 1991 and 2002, 76 percent of all drug offenders who were prosecuted as a result of QCMEG activity were convicted (page 19).

- In 2002, among those QCMEG drug offenders convicted and sentenced, probation sentences accounted for the largest proportion (48 percent), followed by probation (37 percent) and jail sentences (15 percent) (page 21).
- Between 1991 and 2002, prison sentences resulting from QCMEG cases accounted for 55 percent of all drug-law violators sent to prison from the region where QCMEG operates (page 22).
- Unlike the arrests made by the participating and non-participating agencies, the arrests made by QCMEG tended to involve the substances considered to be most serious (i.e., felony versus misdemeanor) but less likely to involve the substances for which a large proportion of community residents were seeking and receiving substance abuse treatment in 2002 (page 26).
- According to QCMEG survey responses, cannabis, cocaine, and crack continued to be the most visible drugs on the street and were all reported to be “easily available” across all regions analyzed. Methamphetamine was reported as moderately available statewide, available to a lesser degree in the regions covered by all MEGs and task forces in mostly urban regions, but easily available in the region covered by QCMEG. The perceived availability of LSD was greater in the region covered by QCMEG than it was statewide or in the regions covered by other mostly urban MEGs and task forces (page 29).

I. Introduction

The Quad-Cities Metropolitan Enforcement Group (QCMEG) covers the Illinois county Rock Island. Rock Island had a 2002 total population of 148,171, which remained relatively unchanged from Rock Island County's 1990 population. In 2002, four local Illinois police agencies participated in QCMEG. These include the Rock Island County Sheriff's Office and the following municipal police departments: Rock Island, East Moline, and Moline. These agencies served 83 percent of the population in the region covered by QCMEG in 2002 (see Map 1 on page 32). In addition, the following Iowa law enforcement agencies also participate in QCMEG: Scott County Sheriff's Office and the Bettendorf and Davenport police departments. A participating agency is defined as one that contributes either personnel or financial resources to QCMEG.

In addition to the agencies that participate in QCMEG, Rock Island County is served by nine additional Illinois police departments that do not participate in QCMEG. According to the Illinois State Police, local Illinois police departments in the region covered by QCMEG combined employed 315 full-time police officers as of Oct. 31, 2002; 268 of these officers work in agencies participating in QCMEG. In comparison, there were 11 officers assigned to QCMEG in 2002, four of whom were assigned by participating agencies and seven by the Illinois State Police (ISP), Iowa law enforcement agencies, and the Illinois Appellate Prosecutor's Office. Thus, the officers assigned to QCMEG from participating agencies in 2002 accounted for a relatively small proportion—one percent—of the total number of sworn police officers working in the participating police departments.

Since 1989, the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit has received funds under the federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 to document the extent and nature of drug and violent crime in Illinois and the criminal justice system's response to these offenses. As a result of these efforts, the Authority has amassed a large amount of data measuring the extent and nature of drug and violent crime in Illinois and the impact these crimes have had on the criminal justice system. In addition, as part of its monitoring and evaluation efforts, the Authority also requires funded programs to submit monthly data reports describing their activities and accomplishments. To put this information into the hands of Metropolitan Enforcement Group (MEG) and drug task force directors and policy board members, the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit has developed profiles – of which this is one – for each MEG and task force. The profile is intended to provide a general overview of the drug and violent crime problem in the jurisdictions covered by Illinois' MEGs and task forces, and the response to these problems by the units.

In addition to administering federal block-grant funds that come to Illinois for crime control initiatives, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is also responsible for providing policymakers, criminal justice professionals and others with information, tools and technology needed to make effective decisions that improve the quality of criminal justice in Illinois. The Authority provides an objective system-wide forum for identifying critical problems in criminal justice, developing coordinated and cost-effective strategies, and implementing and evaluating solutions to those problems. The specific powers and duties of the Authority are delineated in the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Act (Illinois Compiled Statutes, Ch. 20, Sec. 3930). Two of the Authority's many responsibilities are serving as a clearinghouse of information and research on criminal justice and undertaking research studies to improve the administration of criminal justice.

While the data presented in this report are by no means inclusive of all indicators, they do provide a general overview of drug and violent crime and the response and impact of the criminal justice system. In addition, these data are readily available and consistently defined through existing statewide data collection mechanisms. Some data presented in this profile have been analyzed differently than in previous years; therefore, caution must be taken when comparing numbers presented with previous profiles.

While a considerable amount of the information presented in this profile has been provided to the Authority by QCMEG, a number of state agencies have also provided data to the Authority that are included in this report. Specifically, the Illinois State Police, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, the Illinois Department of Human Services' Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, the Illinois Department of Corrections and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services all provided data used to develop this profile. The support and cooperation of these agencies and their staffs have helped make this report an informative and timely source of information on the activities of the criminal justice system in Illinois.

II. Trends in Violent Index Offenses and Arrests

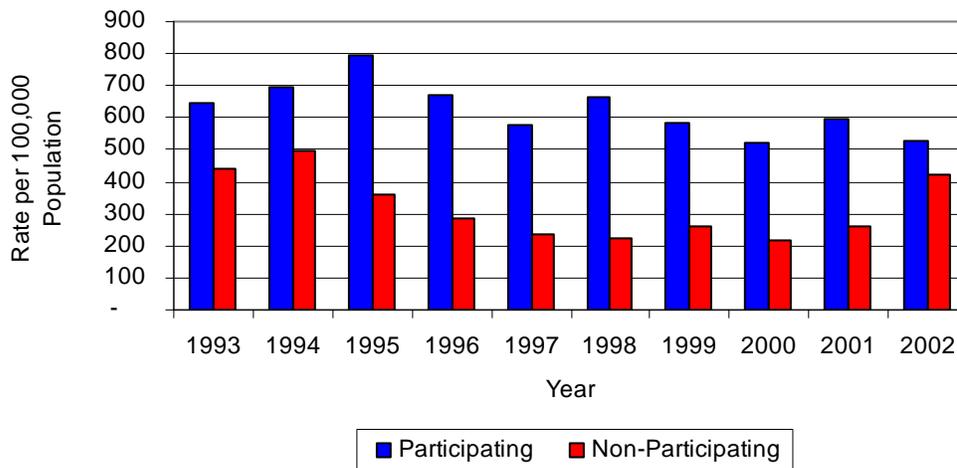
While most of Illinois' Metropolitan Enforcement Groups and drug task forces are primarily involved in drug enforcement activities, it is clear that the relationship between drugs and violence is particularly evident in a number of Illinois communities. In addition, a number of MEGs and task forces have increased their involvement in the investigation of violent crime, particularly that associated with gang activity and violence related to drug distribution, sale and turf battles. One of the most commonly used indicators of the level of crime in a particular jurisdiction is the number of Index offenses reported to the police. In Illinois, as part of the Illinois Uniform Crime Reporting (I-UCR) program, every law enforcement agency in the state is required to report crime data monthly to the Illinois State Police (ISP), either directly or through another law enforcement agency, usually the county sheriff's office. There are eight separate offenses that constitute the Crime Index, including murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault (violent Index offenses), burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson (property Index offenses). Although these eight offenses do not account for all crimes reported to the police, they are considered to be the most serious, frequent, pervasive and consistently defined by different law enforcement agencies.

In 2002, the number of violent Index offenses reported to the police in the region covered by QCMEG totaled 758, an 18 percent decrease from the 920 offenses reported in 1993. The majority (70 percent) of violent Index offenses reported to the police in the region between 1993 and 2002 were aggravated assaults, while 18 percent were robberies.

During the period analyzed, the violent Index offense rate for the region covered by QCMEG decreased 17 percent, from 613 offenses per 100,000 population in 1993 to 512 offenses per 100,000 population in 2002. Similarly, the violent Index offense rate in the participating agencies decreased 18 percent, from 648 to 530 offenses per 100,000 population, while the rate in the non-participating agencies decreased only 5 percent, from 442 to 419 offenses per 100,000 population (Figure 1). Thus, the violent Index offense rate across jurisdictions participating in QCMEG was collectively greater than the violent Index offense rate for jurisdictions not participating in QCMEG.

Figure 1

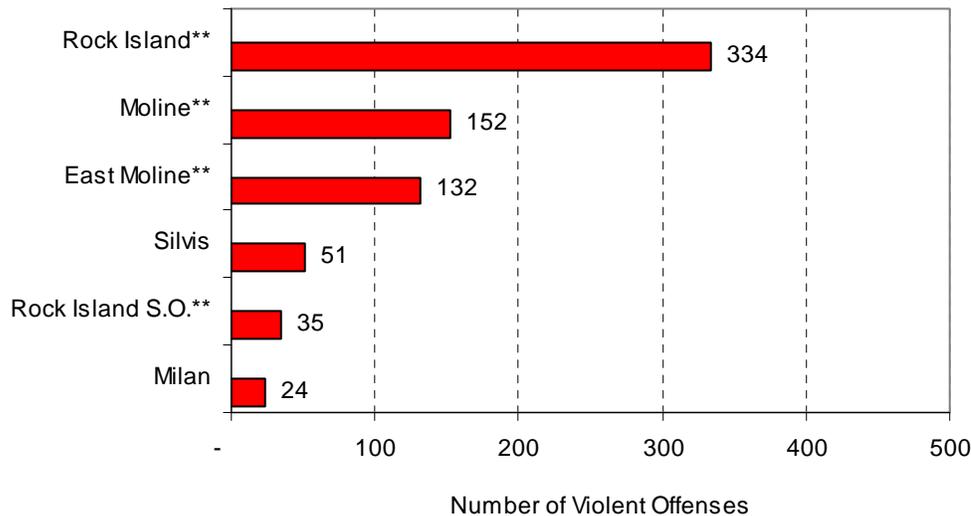
Violent Index Offense Rates for Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by QCMEG



Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police and U.S. Census Bureau data

Across the individual local law enforcement agencies covered by QCMEG’s jurisdiction, three agencies, the Rock Island Police Department, the Moline Police Department, and the East Moline Police Department, accounted for 82 percent of all violent Index offenses reported to the police (Figure 2). Agencies reporting fewer than 20 violent Index offenses in 2002 are excluded from Figure 2. When controlling for differences in the populations served by these law enforcement agencies, the violent Index offense *rate* in 2002 ranged from 855 violent Index offenses per 100,000 population in Rock Island, to 61 offenses per 100,000 population in Hampton.

Figure 2
2002 Violent Index Offenses* Reported by
Participating and Non-participating Agencies in
Region Covered by QCMEG



Source: Illinois State Police

*Agencies reporting 20 or more violent offenses

**Agencies participating in QCMEG

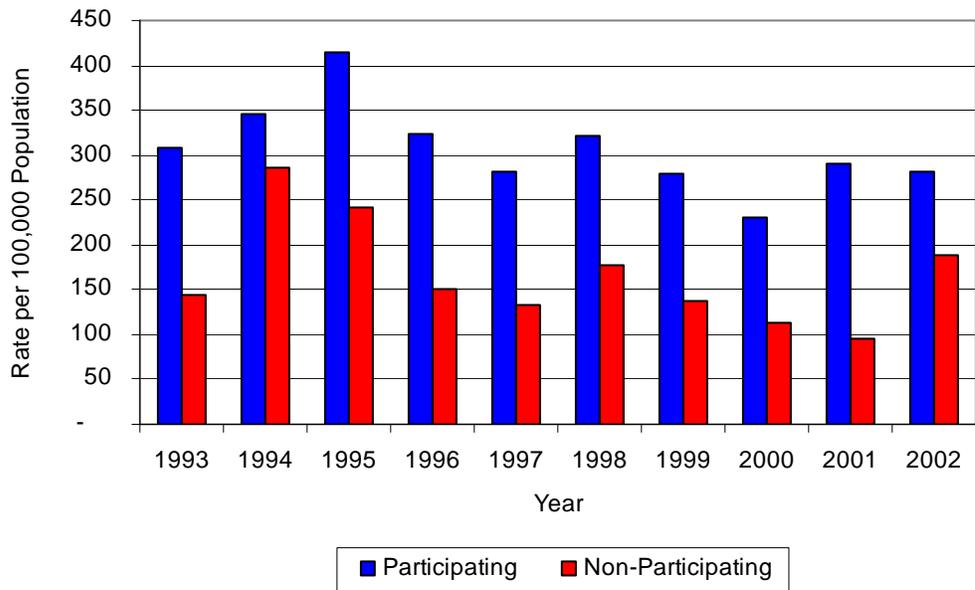
An indicator of the workload that law enforcement agencies place on other components of the justice system is the number of arrests made by police, including those for violent and property Index offenses and drug offenses. Unlike offenses, which are what police must respond to, arrests represent those offenders who may eventually be processed through other components of the justice system, including the courts, county jails, and state and local correctional programs.

Between 1993 and 2002, the number of arrests for violent Index offenses made by law enforcement agencies in the region covered by QCMEG decreased 7 percent, from 421 to 393. As with reported violent Index offenses, the majority (79 percent) of violent Index arrests were for aggravated assaults, followed by robberies (12 percent).

During the period analyzed, the violent Index arrest rate for the region covered by QCMEG decreased 5 percent, from 281 offenses per 100,000 population in 1993 to 265 arrests per 100,000 population in 2002. Similarly, the violent Index arrest rate in the participating agencies decreased 9 percent, from 308 to 281 offenses per 100,000 population, while the rate in the non-participating agencies increased 31 percent, from 143 to 188 offenses per 100,000 population (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Violent Index Arrest Rates for Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by QCMEG

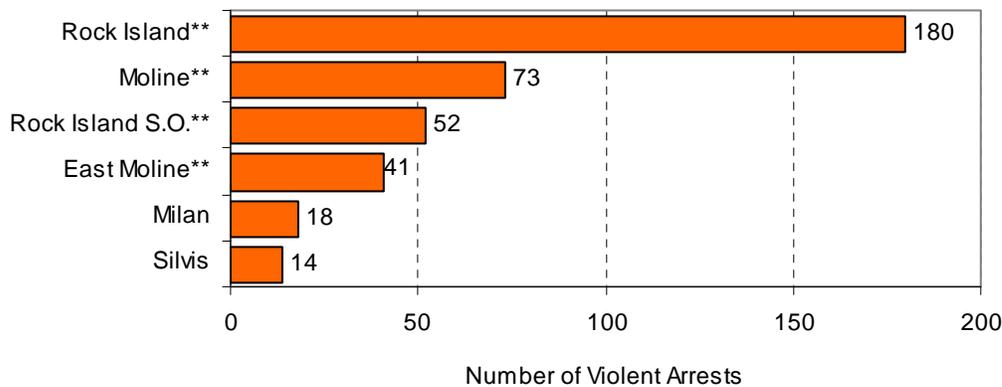


Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police and U. S. Census Bureau data

The majority (88 percent) of arrests for violent Index offenses occurring in the region covered by QCMEG were made by the four participating agencies. Agencies reporting five or fewer arrests for violent Index offenses in 2002 are excluded from Figure 4. Of the 393 violent Index arrests made in 2002, the Rock Island Police Department accounted for almost one-half (46 percent), followed by the Moline Police Department (19 percent).

Figure 4

2002 Violent Index Arrests* Reported by Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by QCMEG



Source: Illinois State Police

*Agencies reporting more than five violent arrests

**Agencies participating in QCMEG

III. Trends in Drug Arrests

There are two sources of drug arrest data presented in this section. One source is the Illinois Uniform Crime Reporting (I-UCR) program that includes information submitted by local law enforcement agencies on the number of persons arrested for violations of Illinois' Cannabis Control Act, Controlled Substances Act, Hypodermic Syringes and Needles Act, and Drug Paraphernalia Control Act. In addition, data on drug arrests made by Illinois' MEGs and task forces are reported to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. In some jurisdictions, arrests made by the MEG or task force may be reported by both local law enforcement agencies through the I-UCR and to the Authority by the unit. In other jurisdictions, arrests made by the MEG or task force are only reported to the Authority by the unit. Therefore, in some instances drug arrests may be double counted – included in both local agency statistics reported to I-UCR and those of the MEG or task force. Currently there is no mechanism in place to ensure that drug arrest statistics are not being duplicated at both the local agency and MEG/task force level. This should be kept in mind when interpreting the information presented in the following section.

The majority of drug offenses in Illinois are violations of either the *Cannabis Control Act* – which prohibits the possession, sale and cultivation of marijuana – or the *Controlled Substances Act* – which prohibits the possession, sale, distribution or manufacture of all other illegal drugs, such as cocaine and opiates. Illinois also has various other laws prohibiting other drug-related activity. These include the *Hypodermic Syringes and Needles Act* – which prohibits the possession or sale of hypodermic instruments – and the *Drug Paraphernalia Control Act* – which prohibits the possession, sale or delivery of drug paraphernalia. In general, violations of Illinois Controlled Substances Act are considered to be more serious, since they primarily involve cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and hallucinogens, and are almost all classified under Illinois law as felonies – offenses for which a sentence to prison for one year or more is provided. The majority of cannabis and drug paraphernalia offenses encountered by police, on the other hand, tend to be misdemeanor-level offenses – those offenses for which a sentence to a term of incarceration in other than a prison for less than one year may be imposed.

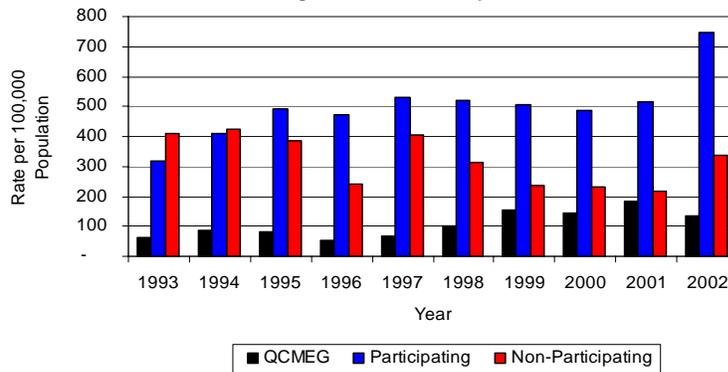
In 2002, local law enforcement agencies in Rock Island County, the region covered by QCMEG, reported 1,321 arrests for drug law violations, more than double the 600 arrests reported in 1993. Between 1993 and 2002, arrests for violations of Illinois' Cannabis Control Act out-numbered arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act every year in Rock Island County. During the same period, the number of arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act in Rock Island County more than doubled, from 318 to 683, while arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act increased 76 percent, from 181 to 318. In addition, arrests for violations of the Drug Paraphernalia Control Act, enacted in 1993, increased dramatically, from 97 in 1993 to 318 in 2002. Much of this increase can be attributed to a 1994 addition to the Drug Paraphernalia Control Act, which included the possession of drug paraphernalia as a violation.

Because arrests for violations of the Drug Paraphernalia Control Act are frequently made in conjunction with other drug offense arrests, these arrests may be double-counted, thus skewing the actual number of drug arrests. Therefore, only arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act and Controlled Substances Act will be used for drug arrest comparisons between QCMEG and the participating and non-participating agencies.

During the period analyzed, the drug arrest rate for violations of the Cannabis Control Act and the Controlled Substances Act, combined, in the region covered by QCMEG more than doubled, from 333 arrests per 100,000 population in 1993 to 676 arrests per 100,000 population in 2002. Similarly, the drug arrest rate in the participating agencies more than doubled, from 317 to 745, while the drug arrest rate for non-participating agencies decreased 18 percent from 410 to 335 arrests per 100,000 population. The

arrest rate for QCMEG also more than doubled between 1993 and 2002, from 64 to 133 arrests per 100,000 population (Figure 5). Thus, while the drug arrest rate for non-participating agencies exceeded the drug arrest rate across jurisdictions participating in QCMEG in 1993 and 1994, the drug arrest rate in participating agencies was greater than the rate for non-participating agencies every year beginning in 1995. Although the drug arrest rate for QCMEG was significantly lower than the rate experienced by both the participating and non-participating agencies, between 1993 and 2002, QCMEG accounted for 21 percent of the arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act and Controlled Substances Act, with just 11 officers, compared to all of the participating agencies combined (Figure 5).

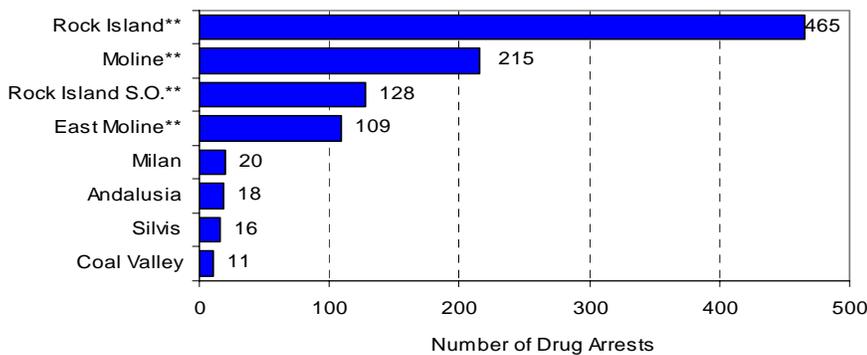
Figure 5
Total Drug Arrest Rates for QCMEG and Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by QCMEG



Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police, QCMEG and U.S. Census Bureau data

Across the local law enforcement agencies in the region covered by QCMEG, the total number of drug arrests, including the Cannabis Control Act, the Controlled Substances Act, the Drug Paraphernalia Control Act, and the Hypodermic Syringes and Needles Act, ranged from zero to 542 in 2002. Of the 1,001 drug arrests made during 2002 in the region, the four participating agencies accounted for 92 percent of these drug arrests. Also, the four agencies participating in QCMEG were the same agencies reporting the highest number of drug arrests in the region. The Rock Island Police Department accounted for 46 percent of all drug arrests in Rock Island County, while the Moline Police Department accounted for 21 percent (Figure 6). Agencies reporting fewer than ten drug arrests in 2002 are excluded from Figure 6.

Figure 6
2002 Drug Arrests* Reported by Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by QCMEG



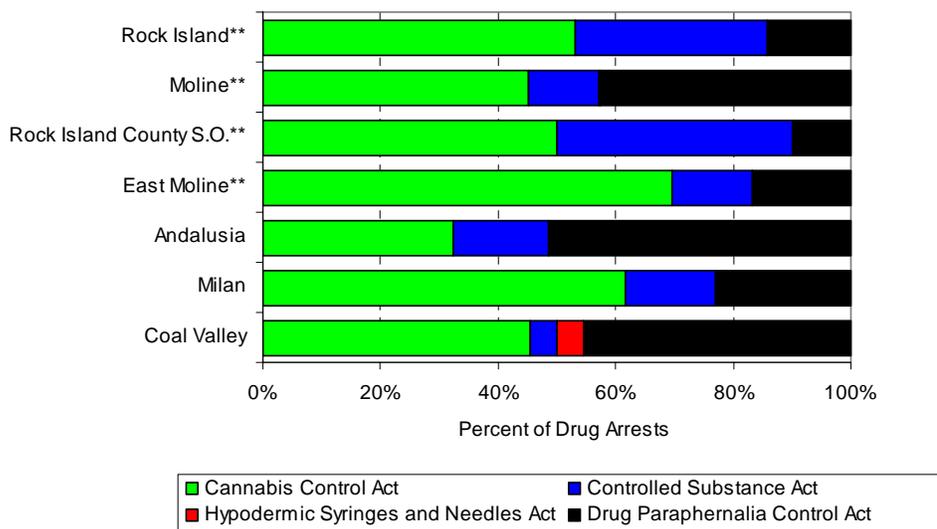
Source: Illinois State Police

*Agencies reporting ten or more drug arrests

**Agencies participating in QCMEG

In addition to the dramatic difference in the number of drug arrests made, differences were also apparent in the types of drug law violation arrests across agencies in the region. In 2002, violations of the Cannabis Control Act accounted for the majority of arrests across most individual agencies in the region covered by QCMEG (Figure 7).

Figure 7
Total 2002 Drug Arrests* Reported by Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by QCMEG, by Drug Type



Source: Illinois State Police

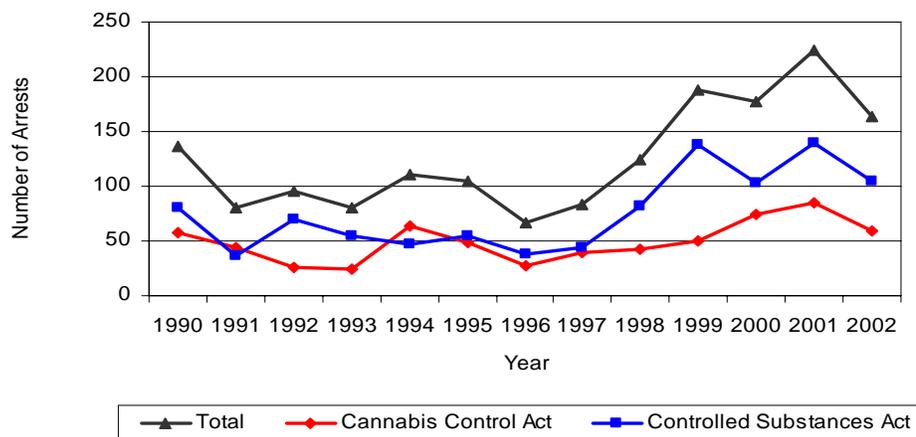
*Agencies reporting 20 or more drug arrests
 **Agencies participating in QCMEG

Between 1993 and 2002, the number of combined cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by QCMEG more than doubled, from 80 to 164 (Figure 8). During the period analyzed, the number of QCMEG arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act more than doubled, from 25 to 59, while arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act increased 91 percent, from 55 to 105 (Figure 8). Although the increase in QCMEG arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act from 1993 to 2002 was greater than the increase in QCMEG arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act during that time, violations of the Controlled Substances Act accounted for a majority of drug arrests made by QCMEG during the time period analyzed (61 percent). This was not true for most local police departments in the region, for which a majority of drug arrests were for violations of the Cannabis Control Act.

Between 1993 and 2002, the proportion of drug arrests accounted for by violations of the Controlled Substances Act increased for both participating and non-participating agencies in Rock Island County. For QCMEG, the proportion of drug arrests accounted for by controlled substance violations decreased seven percent between 1993 and 2002. In 2002, 64 percent of the drug arrests made by QCMEG were for violations of the Controlled Substances Act, compared to 69 percent in 1993. In 2002, arrests for controlled substances violations accounted for 32 percent of the drug arrests made by the participating agencies and 25 percent by the non-participating agencies, compared to 42 percent and 16 percent, respectively, in 1993. One interpretation of the fact that arrests by QCMEG were more likely than arrests by either participating or non-participating agencies to involve violations of Illinois' Controlled

Substances Act as opposed to the Cannabis Control Act is that QCMEG is more focused than local police departments in the type of offenders targeted and arrested, and is also arresting more serious drug law violators since violations of the Controlled Substances Act are more likely to involve felony-level offenses.

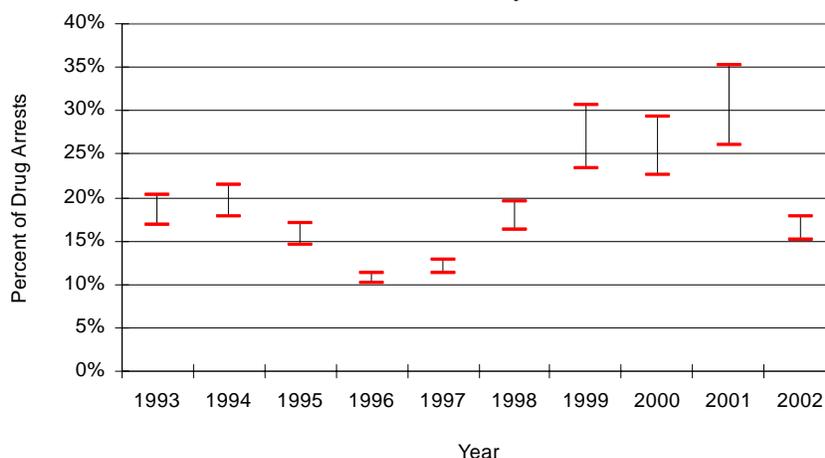
Figure 8
Drug Arrests by QCMEG



Source: QCMEG

The data presented below represent the percentage of total drug arrests made by participating agencies that are credited to QCMEG. An upper and lower bound are shown in Figure 9, accounting for whether or not QCMEG's numbers are included as part of the UCR submissions made by participating departments (which is unknown at this point). The upper bound indicates the percentage of arrests if *all* of the QCMEG arrests are included in the local UCR submissions. The lower bound indicates the percentage if *none* of the QCMEG arrests are included in the local UCR submissions. It is estimated that the proportion of all drug arrests made in the jurisdictions of participating agencies, and accounted for by QCMEG, was between 17 to 20 percent in 1993, and decreased slightly to between 15 and 18 percent in 2002.

Figure 9
Percent of Total Drug Arrests
Accounted for by QCMEG



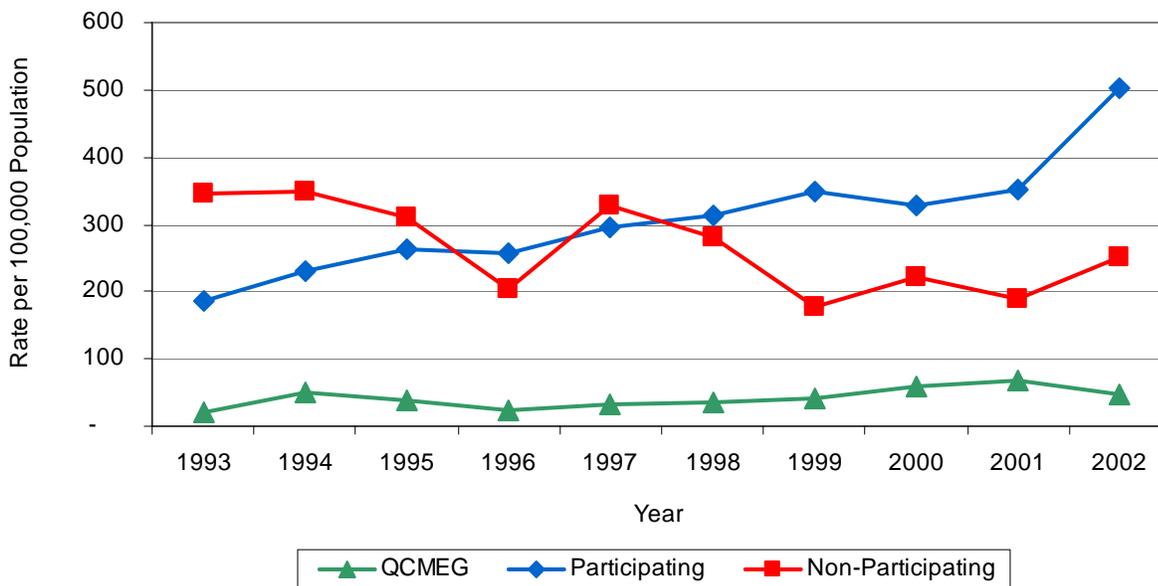
Source: ICJIA calculations using Source: Source:
Source: Illinois State Police and QCMEG data

The number of arrests for violations of Illinois' Cannabis Control Act in Rock Island County totaled 683 in 2002, more than double the 318 arrests made for cannabis violations in 1993. Between 1993 and 2002, the proportion of all drug arrests accounted for by violations of the Cannabis Control Act in the region increased from 64 percent to 68 percent. In 2002, agencies participating in QCMEG accounted for the largest portion (91 percent) of the total number of arrests for cannabis violations. QCMEG reported a total of 59 arrests for cannabis violations in 2002, 36 percent of the unit's drug arrests.

During the period analyzed, the cannabis arrest rate for the region covered by QCMEG also more than doubled, from 212 arrests per 100,000 population in 1993 to 461 arrests per 100,000 population in 2002. The cannabis arrest rate in the participating agencies nearly tripled, from 185 to 504 arrests per 100,000 population, while the arrest rate in the non-participating agencies decreased 27 percent from 347 to 252 arrests per 100,000 population. The cannabis arrest rate for QCMEG more than doubled from 20 arrest per 100,000 population in 1993 to 48 arrests per 100,000 population in 2002 (Figure 10). Overall, the arrest rate for violations of the Cannabis Control Act was higher in the area served by non-participating agencies between 1993 and 1997, but from 1998 to 2002, the arrest rate was higher in areas served by participating agencies.

Figure 10

Cannabis Arrests Rates in the Region Covered by QCMEG as Reported by Participating Agencies, Non-participating Agencies, and QCMEG



Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police, U.S. Census Bureau, and QCMEG data

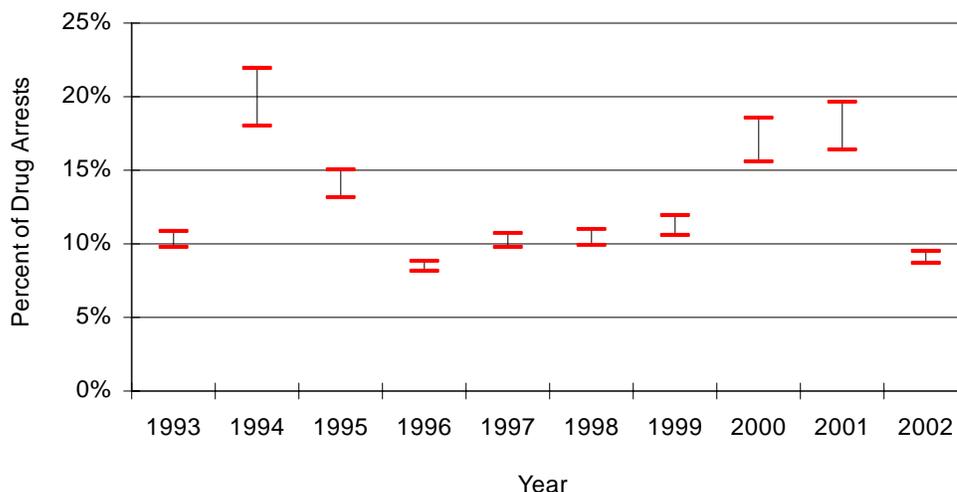
The data presented below represent the percent of total arrests for the violation of the Cannabis Control Act made by participating agencies that was accounted for by QCMEG. An upper and lower bound is shown in Figure 11, which accounts for whether or not the units numbers are counted as part of the UCR submissions made by participating departments (which is unknown at this point). The upper bound

indicates the percentage of arrests if *all* of the QCMEG arrests are included in the local UCR submissions. The lower bound indicates the percentage if *none* of the QCMEG arrests are included in the local UCR submissions.

It is estimated that the proportion of all arrests for the violation of the Cannabis Control Act made in the jurisdictions of participating agencies, and accounted for by QCMEG, was between 10 and 11 percent in 1993, but declined slightly in 2002 to between 9 and 10 percent. The data presented in Figure 11 suggest that arrests for the violation of the Cannabis Control Act made by QCMEG remained relatively stable throughout much of the period analyzed.

Figure 11

**Percent of Cannabis Arrests
Accounted for by QCMEG**



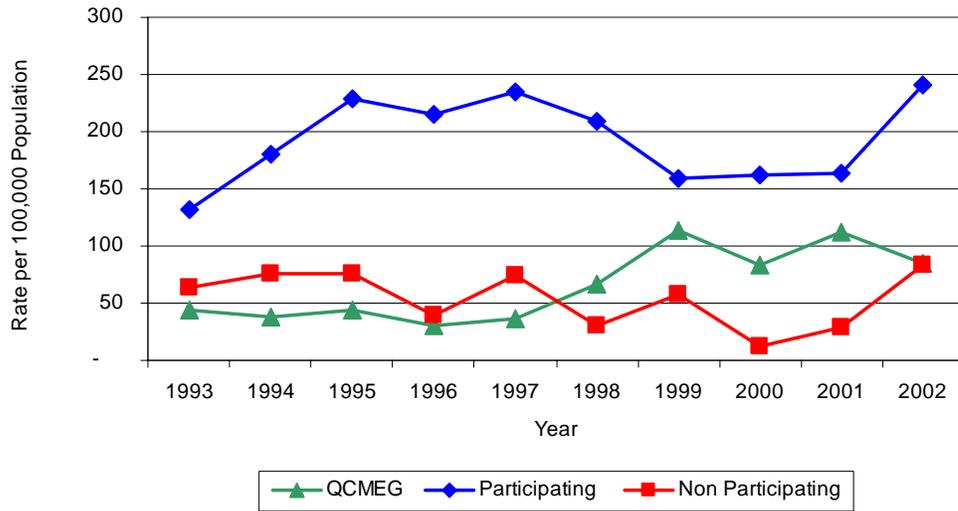
Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police and QCMEG data

In Rock Island County, the number of arrests for violations of Illinois' Controlled Substances Act increased 76 percent between 1993 and 2002, from 181 to 318. Between 1993 and 2002, the proportion of all drug arrests accounted for by violations of the Controlled Substances Act in the region decreased from 36 percent to 32 percent. In 2002, QCMEG reported 105 arrests for controlled substance violations, 64 percent of all drug arrests reported to the Authority by the unit.

Between 1993 and 2002, the arrest rate for Controlled Substances Act violations for the region covered by QCMEG increased 78 percent, from 121 to 215 arrests per 100,000 population (Figure 12). The controlled substances arrest rate in the participating agencies increased 83 percent, from 132 to 241 arrests per 100,000 population, while the arrest rate in the non-participating agencies increased 32 percent, from 64 to 84 arrests per 100,000 population. The controlled substances arrest rate for QCMEG increased nearly 100 percent, from 44 to 85 arrests per 100,000 population (Figure 12). Thus, the arrest rate for violations of the Controlled Substances Act was higher for the participating agencies than for the non-participating agencies as well as for QCMEG.

Figure 12

Controlled Substances Arrest Rates in the Region Covered by QCMEG as Reported by Participating Agencies, Non-participating Agencies, and QCMEG



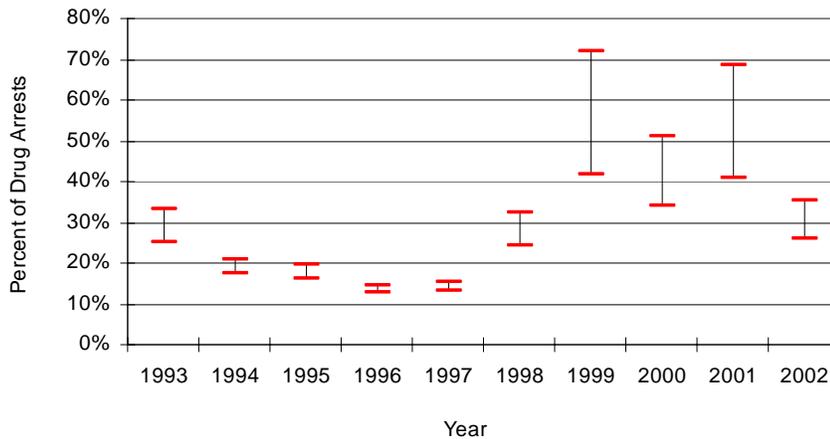
Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police, U.S. Census Bureau, and QCMEG data

The data presented below illustrate the percent of total arrests for the violation of the Controlled Substances Act made by participating agencies and accounted for by QCMEG. An upper and lower bound is shown in Figure 13, which accounts for whether or not the units numbers are counted as part of the UCR submissions made by participating departments (which is unknown at this point). The upper bound indicates the percentage of arrests if *all* of the QCMEG arrests are included in the local UCR submissions. The lower bound indicates the percentage if *none* of the QCMEG arrests are included in the local UCR submissions.

It is estimated that the proportion of all arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act made in the jurisdictions of participating agencies accounted for by QCMEG was between 25 and 33 percent in 1993, and remained about the same at 26 to 35 percent in 2002. Unlike the arrests made by QCMEG for violations of the Cannabis Control Act, arrests made by QCMEG for violations of the Controlled Substances Act represented over half (53 percent) of all arrests made for violations of the Controlled Substances Act in the region covered by QCMEG, despite that fact that only a small proportion of officers working in Rock Island County were assigned to QCMEG. When examining the three figures together (Figures 9, 11, and 13), the data suggest that QCMEG focused on arresting individuals violating the Controlled Substances Act, most of which are felony offenses.

Figure 13

Percent of Controlled Substances Arrests Accounted for by QCMEG

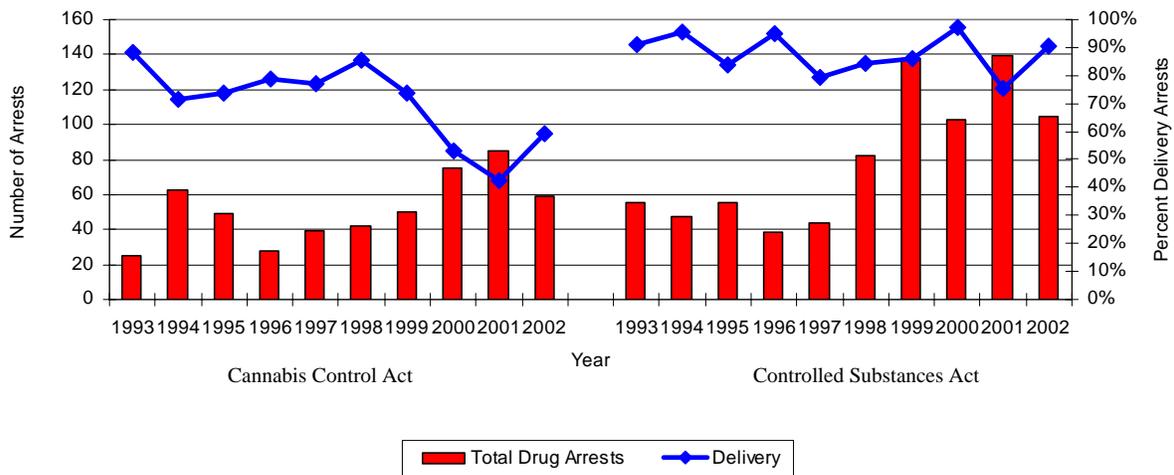


Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police and QCMEG data

The majority of all drug arrests reported by QCMEG are for delivery. Between 1993 and 2002, the number of drug delivery arrests made by QCMEG increased 81 percent, from 72 to 130. Arrests for drug delivery accounted for 79 percent of all drug arrests made by QCMEG between 1993 and 2002. When cannabis and controlled substance arrests were examined separately, arrests for delivery of controlled substances accounted for 88 percent of the total number of arrests made for violations of the Controlled Substance Act, whereas arrests for the delivery of cannabis accounted for 70 percent of all arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act. While the number of QCMEG arrests increased between 1993 and 2002, the proportion of drug arrests accounted for by arrests for the delivery of both cannabis and controlled substances decreased, from 88 percent to 59 percent and from 91 to 90 percent, respectively, although the decrease in the proportion of cannabis delivery arrests was greater than the decrease in the proportion of arrests for the delivery of controlled substances.

Figure 14

QCMEG Drug Arrests for Possession versus Delivery, by Drug Type



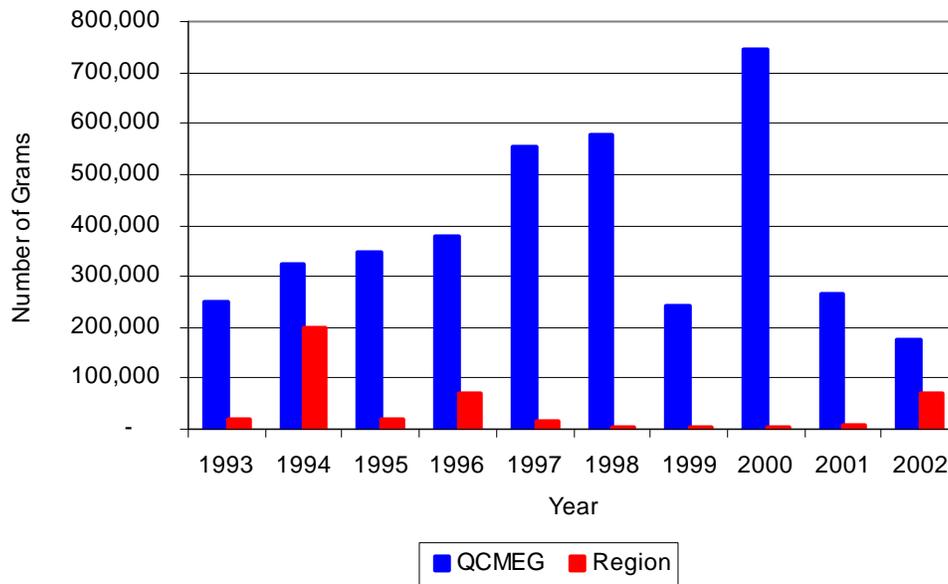
Source: ICJIA calculations using QCMEG data

IV. Trends in Drug Seizures

Drugs seized by law enforcement agencies are another indicator of the extent and nature of illegal drug trade in a jurisdiction. When illegal drugs are seized by law enforcement agencies, all or a portion of the total amount seized is submitted to a crime lab for analysis. Most agencies submit drugs to one of the Illinois State Police crime labs. These labs record the quantity of drugs submitted from each county. This section discusses trends in the quantities of illegal drugs seized and submitted to the Illinois State Police from local law enforcement agencies in Rock Island County as well as the quantities of drugs seized by QCMEG. It is important to note, however, that while QCMEG data report the total quantities of drugs actually *seized*, local agency data only represent the quantities of seized drugs that are *submitted* to the Illinois State Police for analysis. County-level cannabis, cocaine, crack, methamphetamine, and heroin seizure rates for Illinois' 102 counties are provided in maps located in the Appendix of this report.

As in most Illinois jurisdictions, cannabis accounts for the majority of illegal drugs seized in the region covered by QCMEG. The quantity of cannabis seized and submitted by law enforcement agencies in Rock Island County varied annually, but more than tripled between 1993 and 2002, from 20,991 grams to 71,307 grams. In 1994, nearly 200,000 grams of cannabis were seized in Rock Island County, the largest amount seized during any single year during the period analyzed. Although the quantity of cannabis seized by QCMEG increased dramatically between 1993 and 2000, QCMEG cannabis seizures experienced an overall decrease of 30 percent between 1993 and 2002, from 250,844 grams to 175,228 grams. Nearly 600,000 grams of cannabis were seized in 1996 and 1997, and almost 750,000 grams seized in 2000 (Figure 15). In 2002, QCMEG's cannabis seizure rate of 142,320 grams per 100,000 population was more than seven-times higher than the statewide cannabis seizure rate of 19,437 grams per 100,000 population, and nearly triple the seizure rate of 48,125 grams of cannabis per 100,000 population in Rock Island County, the region covered by QCMEG (Map 2).

Figure 15
Cannabis Seized and Submitted to ISP by Rock Island County and Seized by QCMEG

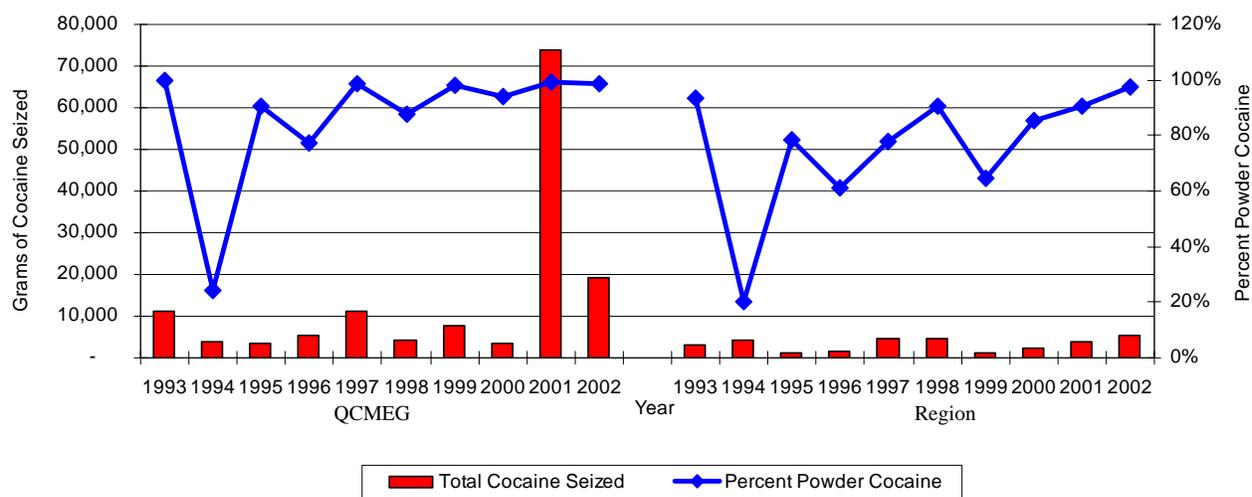


Source: Illinois State Police and QCMEG

Between 1993 and 2002, a combination of crack and powder cocaine has accounted for an increasing proportion of drugs seized in the region covered by QCMEG. The quantity of cocaine seized and submitted by law enforcement agencies in Rock Island County increased 73 percent, from 3,220 grams in 1993 to 5,562 grams in 2002. Between 1993 and 2002, the quantity of cocaine seized by QCMEG increased 77 percent, from 10,991 grams to 19,406 grams.

The proportion of all cocaine seized accounted for by powder cocaine in the region covered by QCMEG varied widely during the period analyzed. Overall, 76 percent of the cocaine seized in Rock Island County was accounted for by seizures of powder cocaine between 1993 and 2002, despite falling to a low of 20 percent in 1994. For QCMEG, powder cocaine accounted for an overwhelming majority (87 percent) of all cocaine seized from 1993 to 2002 (Figure 16). In 2002, QCMEG's cocaine seizure rate of 15,761 grams per 100,000 population was four-times higher than the cocaine seizure rate of 3,754 grams per 100,000 population in the region covered by QCMEG but 28 percent less than the statewide cocaine seizure rate of 21,891 grams per 100,000 population (Maps 3 and 4).

Figure 16
Powder and Crack Cocaine Seized and Submitted to ISP
by Rock Island County and Seized by QCMEG



Source: Illinois State Police and QCMEG

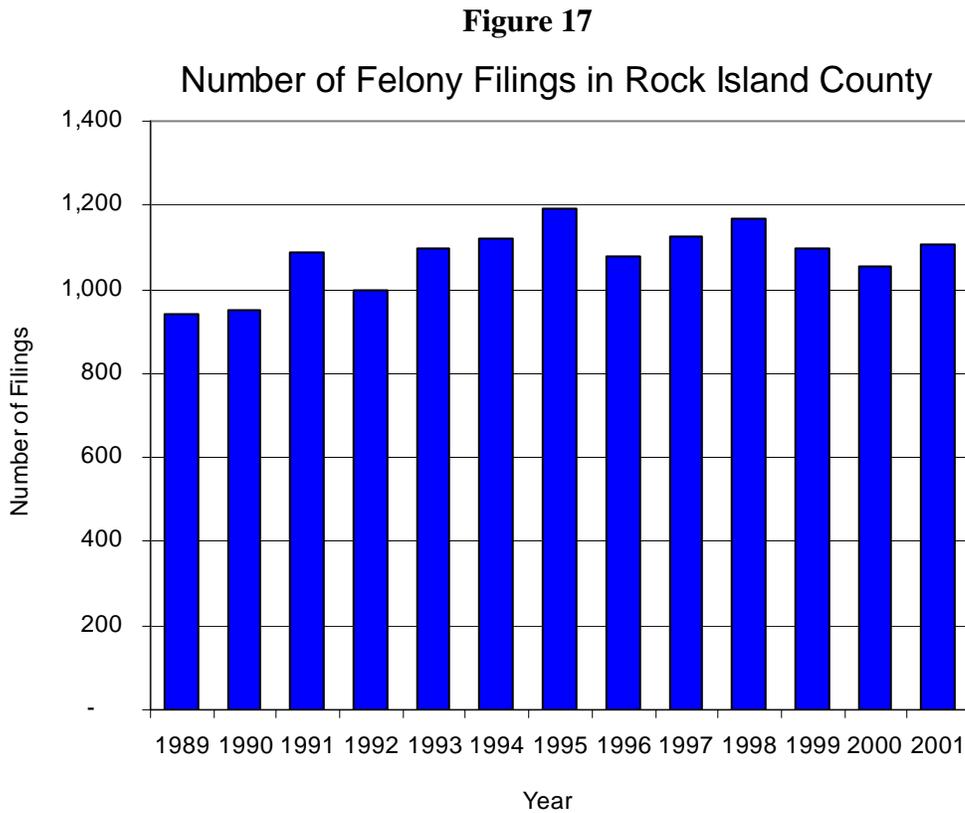
The total quantity of illegal drugs seized and submitted by law enforcement agencies in Rock Island County more than tripled between 1993 and 2002, from 24,685 grams to 77,069 grams. However, the total quantity of illegal drugs seized by QCMEG decreased 25 percent, from 261,892 grams in 1993 to 195,744 grams in 2002.

From 1994 to 2002 (data from 1993 were not available), methamphetamine seizures accounted for a relatively small proportion of total drugs seized by QCMEG and in Rock Island County. During the time period analyzed, the quantity of methamphetamine seized by law enforcement agencies in the region covered by QCMEG decreased 70 percent, from 120 grams to 36 grams. Conversely, the quantity of methamphetamine seized by QCMEG increased. While there were no reported methamphetamine seizures by QCMEG from 1994 to 1996, the quantity seized increased from less than two grams in 1997 to 1,104 grams in 2002 (with a period high of 1,323 grams seized in 1998). In 2002, QCMEG had a methamphetamine seizure rate of 897 grams per 100,000 population, significantly higher than the rate of 25 grams per 100,000 population in the region covered by QCMEG and more than quadruple the statewide seizure rate of 222 grams per 100,000 population (Map 5).

V. Trends in Prosecutions for Drug Offenses and All Felonies

Although Illinois has one of the best court reporting systems in the country, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Court only collects information regarding the aggregate number of court filings. Currently, there are no statewide data available on court filings by offense type. The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts reports data on felony criminal court cases. After screening a case and deciding it warrants further action, the state's attorney must file formal charges in court. Felony cases can be punished by a probation term up to four years and incarceration for more than one year.

Between 1989 and 2001, the number of felony filings in the region covered by QCMEG increased 18 percent, from 943 to 1,109 (Figure 17).



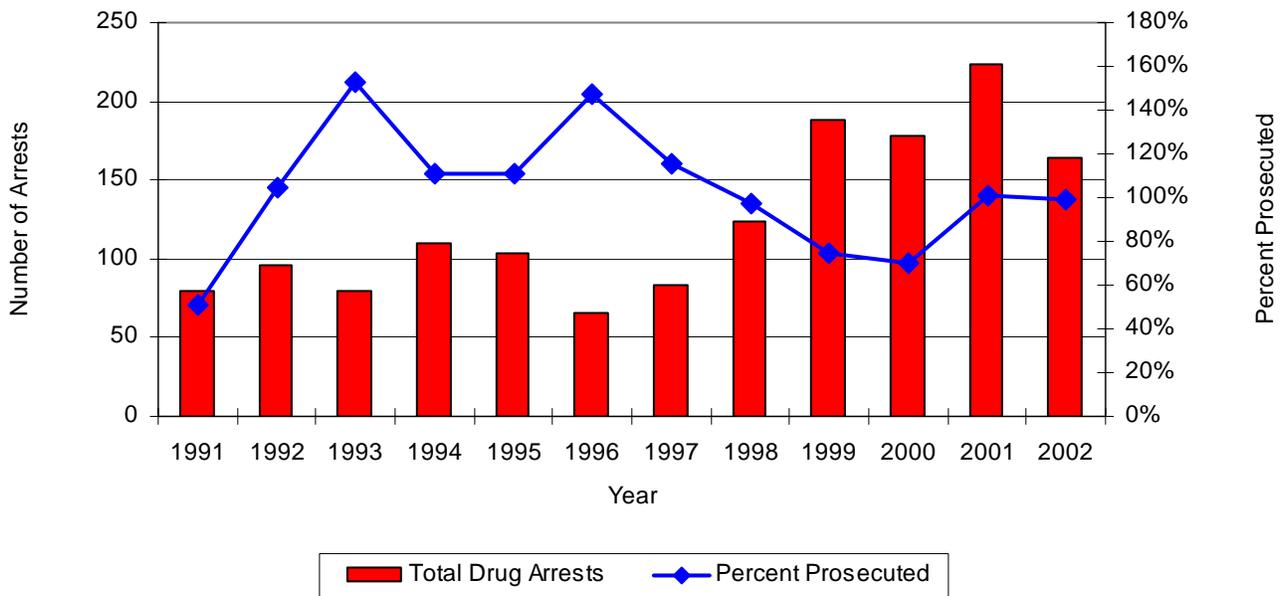
Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Between 1991 and 2002, there were a total of 1,469 drug prosecutions initiated as a result of QCMEG arrests in Rock Island County. The number of QCMEG drug arrests more than doubled, from 80 arrests in 1991 to 164 arrests in 2002 (Figure 18). Between 1991 and 2002, 98 percent of drug arrests by QCMEG resulted in prosecution. Sixty-two percent of QCMEG drug offender prosecutions during this period were for violations of the Controlled Substances Act.

Between 1991 and 2002, 76 percent (1,120) of the 1,469 drug offenders who were prosecuted as a result of QCMEG activity were convicted. Convictions for controlled substances accounted for 66 percent of all QCMEG initiated convictions during the period analyzed. In some years, the proportion of arrests resulting in a prosecution exceeded 100 percent. This is perhaps due to some slight differences in the timing of an arrest and the filings of charges. It may also be due to charges, rather than defendants, being reported by the unit. Also, some offenders have charges filed and a warrant is issued yet an arrest never occurs.

Figure 18

Total QCMEG Drug Arrests and Percentage of Arrests Resulting in Prosecution



Source: QCMEG

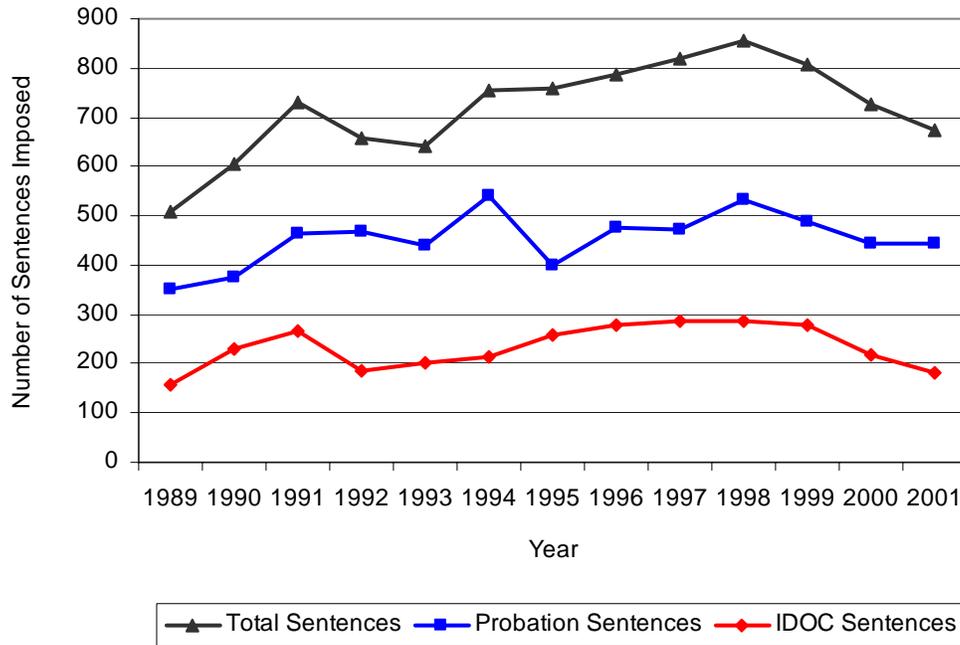
VI. Trends in Percent of Convicted Drug Offenders Sentenced to Prison

Under Illinois law, those convicted of most Class 1, 2, 3, and 4 felonies can be sentenced to probation or prison; the two most commonly used sentencing options. However, there are some exceptions. For example, those convicted of possessing 15 grams or more of cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamine are guilty of a Class 1 felony, but cannot be sentenced to probation. Such instances, as well as for all Class X felonies (e.g., sale/distribution of 15 grams or more of cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine), must result in a sentence to prison and cannot be sentenced to probation. Where a sentence to probation or prison is an option, a number of factors may influence the type and length of sentence imposed, including the severity of the crime, the offender's criminal and social history, and the safety of the community.

Between 1989 and 2001, the number of offenders convicted of a felony and sentenced in the region covered by QCMEG increased 32 percent, from 509 to 674. Although the number of convicted felons sentenced to the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) increased 15 percent between 1989 and 2001, from 156 to 180 with a high of 288 offenders sentenced to IDOC in 1997, the proportion of felons sentenced to IDOC remained relatively stable at about one-third of offenders sentenced each year during the period. In 2001, 443 probation sentences were imposed on convicted felons, a 26 percent increase from the 351 probation sentences in 1989, while 4 percent of all offenders sentenced from 1989 to 2001 received sentences other than probation or prison time (Figure 19).

Figure 19

Sentences Imposed on Felons Convicted in Rock Island County

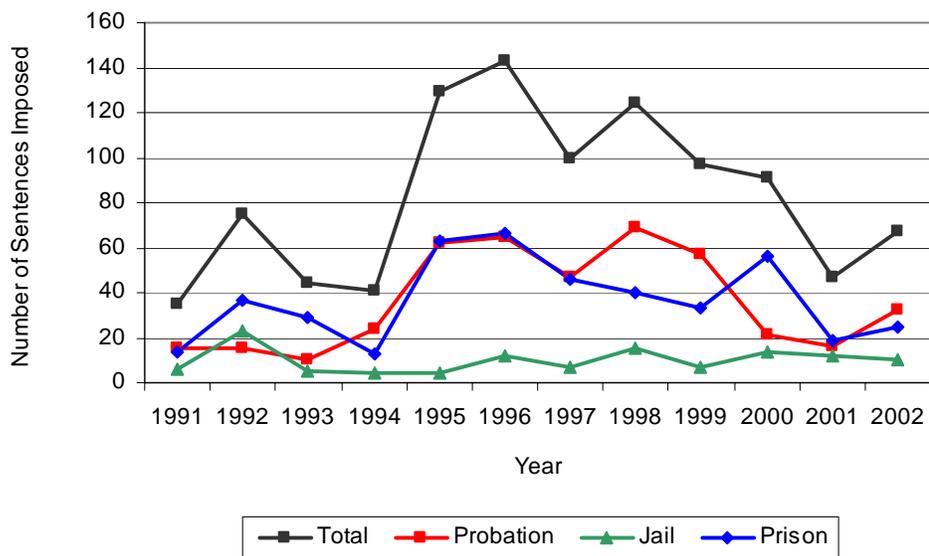


Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Between 1991 and 2002, the number of QCMEG drug offenders convicted and sentenced increased from 35 to 67, reaching a period high of 143 drug offenders convicted and sentenced in 1996. The number of convicted QCMEG drug offenders sentenced to probation increased from 15 in 1991 to 32 in 2002. Similarly, the number of convicted QCMEG drug offenders sentenced to jail also increased, from six in 1991 to ten in 2002, while the number of sentences to prison increased from 14 to 25 during those years (Figure 20). In 2002, among those QCMEG drug offenders convicted and sentenced, probation sentences accounted for the largest proportion (48 percent), followed by prison sentences (37 percent) and jail sentences (15 percent).

Figure 20

Sentences Imposed on Convicted QCMEG Drug Offenders

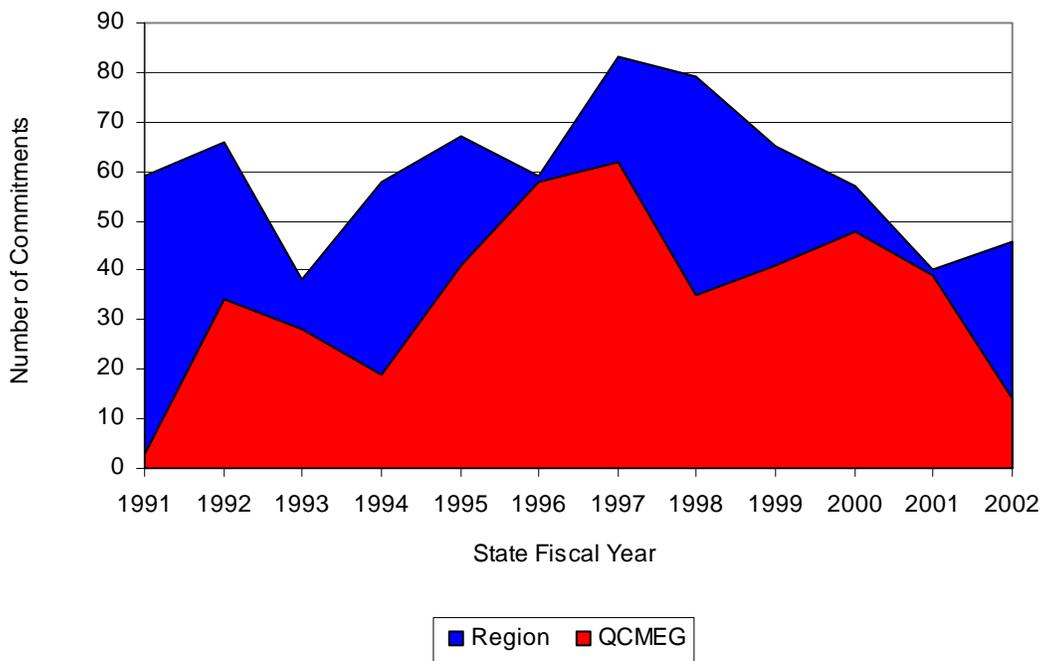


Source: QCMEG

Between state fiscal years¹ 1991 and 2002, the number of new court commitments to IDOC's Adult Division for drug offenses from the region covered by QCMEG decreased 22 percent, from 59 to 46. During the same period, the number of drug offender admissions by QCMEG increased from three to 14 while reaching a period high of 62 admissions in 1997 (Figure 21). Between 1991 and 2002, drug offender admissions to IDOC by QCMEG accounted for 55 percent of all drug admissions in Rock Island County.

Figure 21

**Number of Drug Offenders Committed to IDOC
by QCMEG and Region Covered by QCMEG**



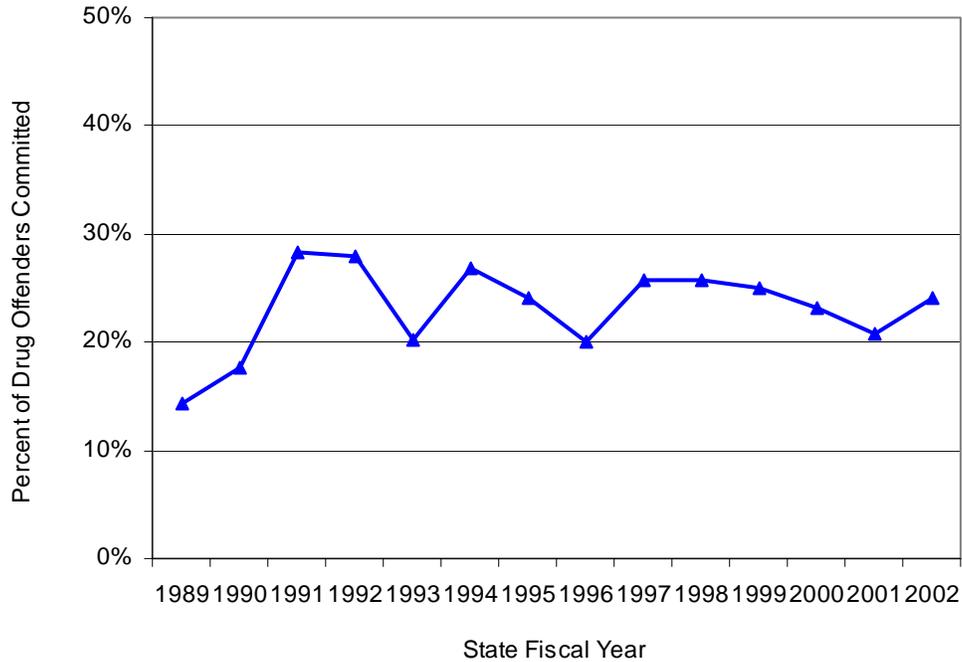
Source: Illinois Department of Corrections and QCMEG

During the period analyzed, drug offenders accounted for an increasing proportion of adults convicted and sentenced to prison from Rock Island County. In 1991, drug offenses accounted for 28 percent of all commitments to IDOC, compared to 24 percent in 2002 (Figure 22).

¹ Some state data are collected according to State Fiscal Year (SFY) instead of calendar year. SFYs begin on July 1st and end the following June 30th, and are named according to the calendar year between January and June, e.g. state fiscal year 1991 was from July 1st, 1990 to June 30th, 1991.

Figure 22

Percent of Drug Offenders Committed to IDOC in Rock Island County

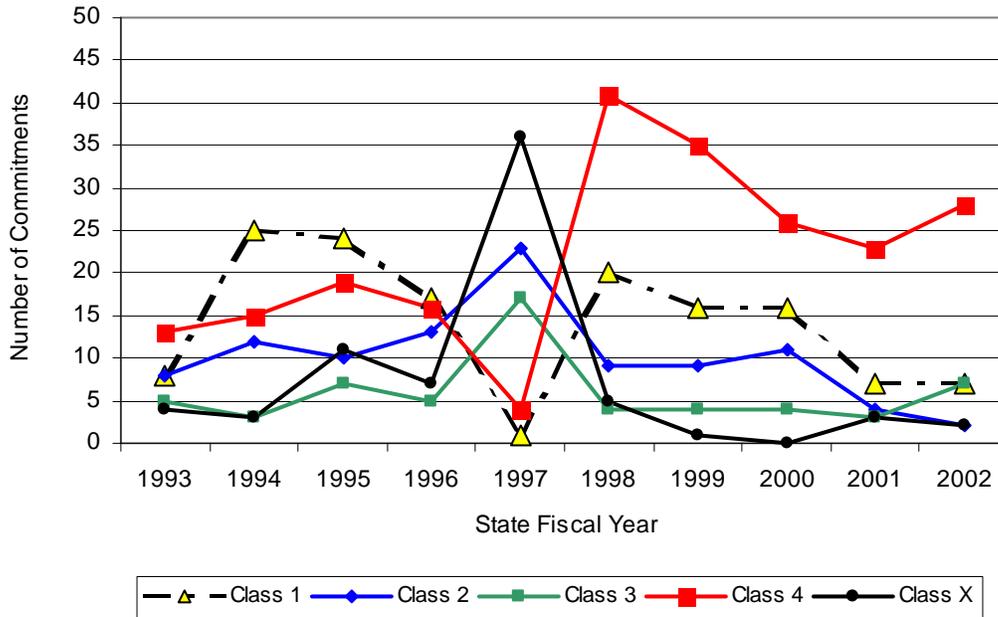


Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Penalties for drug offenses in Rock Island County were also examined between 1993 and 2002. Class 4 felonies accounted for the largest proportion (37 percent) of sentences to IDOC for drug offenses, followed by Class 1 felonies (24 percent), Class 2 felonies (17 percent), Class X felonies (12 percent), and Class 3 felonies (10 percent). The total number of drug offenders sent to IDOC showed an overall increase of 21 percent from 1993 to 2002. Between 1993 and 2002, the number of offenders held in IDOC for Class 3 felonies increased from five to seven, while the number of sentences for Class 4 felonies more than doubled between 1993 and 2002, from 13 to 28. Conversely, the number of Class 1, Class 2, and Class X felonies showed a decrease from 1993 to 2002, from eight to seven, eight to two, and four to two, respectively (Figure 23).

Figure 23

**Drug Offenders Committed to IDOC from
Rock Island County, by Offense Class**



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Along with the overall increase in the number of felony sentences to IDOC, the mean sentence length increased for Class 2 and Class 3 felonies between 1993 and 2002. The mean sentence length for Class 2 felonies experienced the largest increase (28 percent) during the period analyzed, increasing from 3.3 to 4.3 years. Class 3 felonies increased to a lesser degree, from 3.2 to 3.7 years between 1993 and 2002. The mean sentence length for Class 4 felonies remained unchanged at 2.6 years in both 1993 and 2002 despite the fact that the number of Class 4 felonies experienced the greatest increase between 1993 and 2002. Conversely, the mean sentence length for Class 1 felonies decreased from 4.9 years in 1993 to 4.6 years in 2002, while the length of sentences for Class X felonies decreased from 6.8 years to 6.0 between 1993 and 2002.

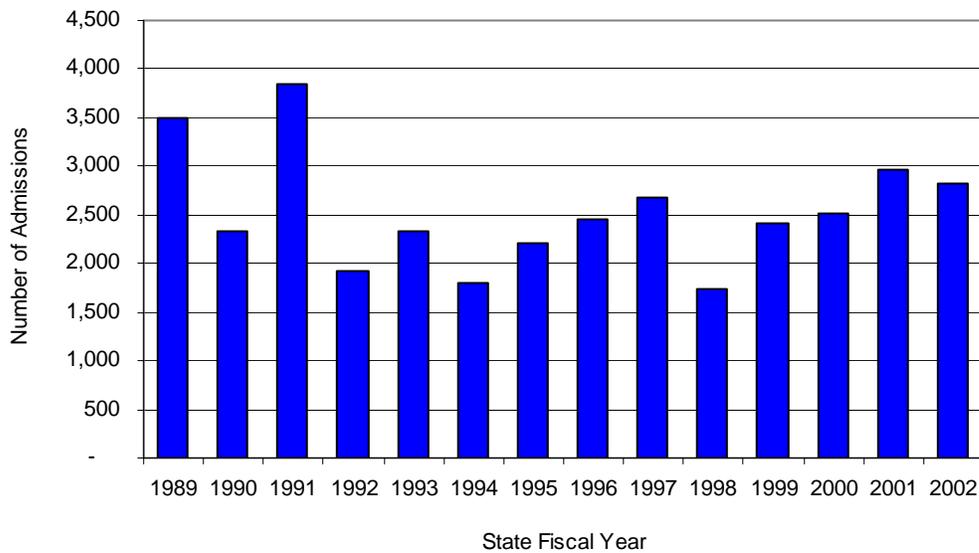
VII. Trends in Drug Treatment Admissions in QCMEG Region by Drug Type

In addition to considering indicators of the extent and nature of drug abuse as reported through the criminal justice system (for example, arrests and prison sentences), there are indicators of substance abuse available from other Illinois social service agencies. Overseeing and supporting treatment for substance users, whether they are referred from the criminal justice system or elsewhere, is the responsibility of the Illinois Department of Human Services' Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (OASA). It is important to note, however, that while OASA data represent the majority of the overall demand for substance abuse treatment in the state, some private programs provide treatment services to a smaller but significant number of clients who may not be included in the state's reporting system.

In state fiscal year 2002, OASA reported 2,814 admissions for alcohol or drug abuse treatment from Rock Island County, a 20 percent decrease from the 3,497 admissions in 1989 (Figure 24). Among the 2,814 admissions to substance abuse treatment in state fiscal year 2002, 45 percent (1,260) reported alcohol as their primary substance of abuse, while abuse of illicit substances accounted for 49 percent.

Figure 24

Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions from Rock Island County



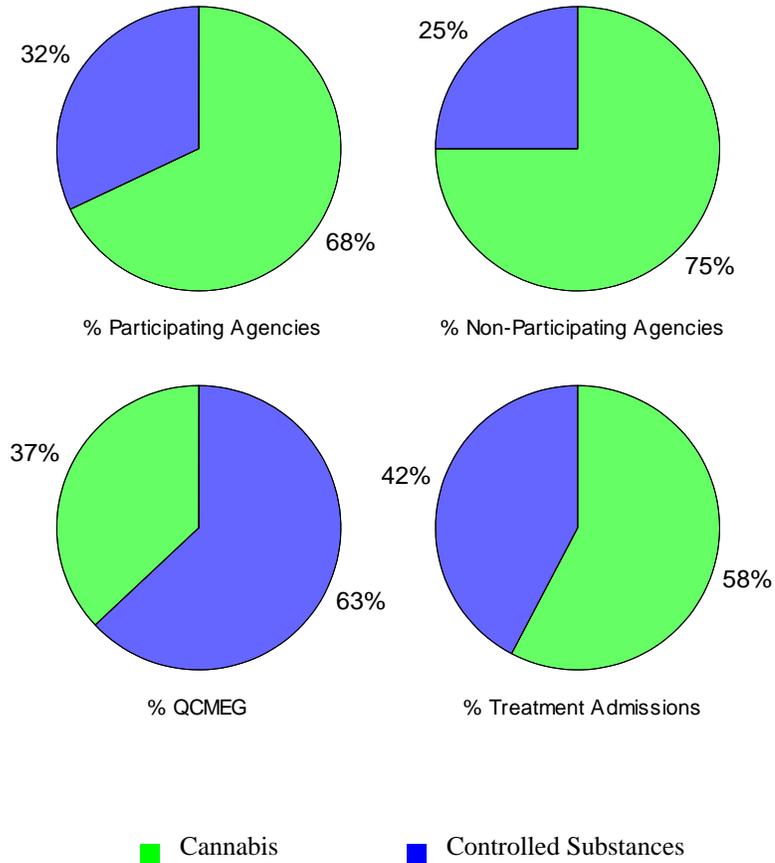
Source: Illinois Department of Human Services' Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse

While drug treatment admissions can be considered a measure of the demand placed on a specific component of the human services system within Illinois, the extent and nature of drug treatment admissions could also be indicative of the substance abuse problem within a particular region. In some respects, the characteristics of those admitted to drug treatment can be considered a profile of the most serious drug abusers in the community, since admission to treatment requires a documented, formal assessment of a drug problem and a level of substance abuse warranting treatment. By comparing the types of drugs of abuse reported by those admitted to substance abuse treatment with the types of drugs involved in law enforcement agency arrests, one can get a sense of the degree to which arrests reflect the drugs which are most problematic within a community.

In the following analyses, the percent of arrests accounted for by drugs classified under Illinois' Controlled Substances Act (primarily cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine) versus the Cannabis Control Act (marijuana) across the participating agencies combined, non-participating agencies combined and QCMEG are compared to the proportion of drug treatment admissions accounted for by these groups of substances. From these comparisons, a number of general conclusions can be made. First, the majority of arrests by local police departments (including those participating in QCMEG and non-participating agencies) were for cannabis offenses. As such, the proportion of arrests made by participating and non-participating agencies accounted for by drugs other than marijuana (Controlled Substances Act offenses) more closely resembled the proportion of drug treatment admissions from the covered region accounted for by these substances. In addition, local arrests may tend to reflect the most widely available and used drug in the region. Unlike the arrests made by the participating and non-participating agencies, the arrests made by QCMEG tended to involve the substances considered to be most serious (i.e., felony versus misdemeanor) but less likely to involve the substances for which a large proportion of community residents were seeking and receiving substance abuse treatment in 2002 (Figure 25).

Figure 25

Comparison of Drug Arrests by QCMEG and Participating and Non-participating Agencies vs. Drug Abuse Treatment Admissions in Rock Island County, 2002



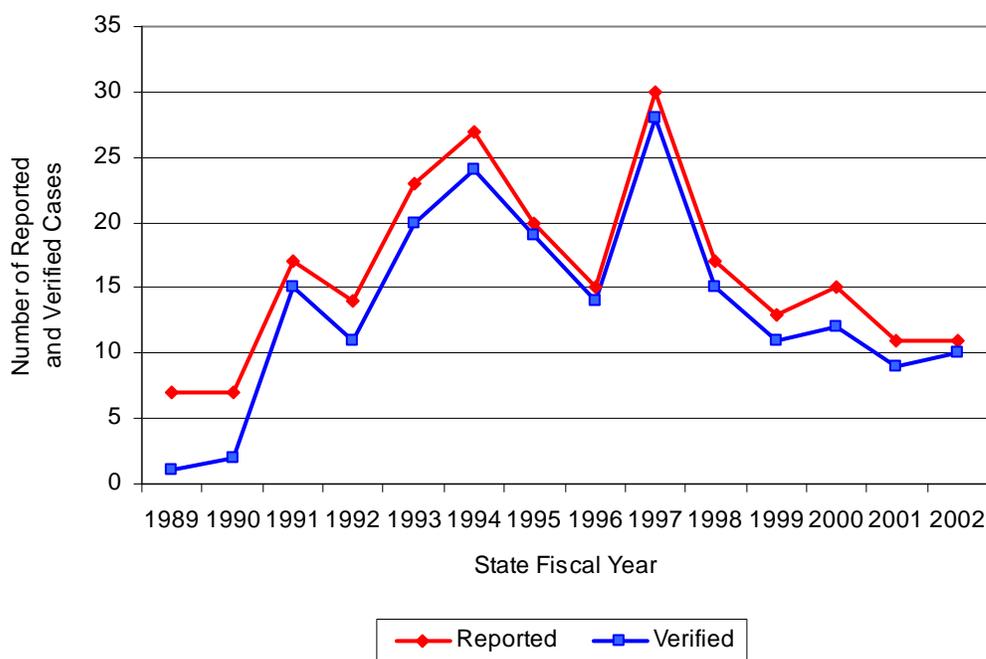
Source: Illinois Department of Human Service's Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse and QCMEG

VIII. Trends in Substance-Exposed Infants

Illinois continues to experience the effects of prenatal substance abuse. In Illinois, if a baby is born and thought to have been exposed to illegal substances or alcohol, either through observation by physicians or toxicology tests, the case is reported to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. These cases are then investigated by DCFS to verify the child's prenatal exposure to either alcohol or illegal substances. Between state fiscal years 1989 and 2002, 96 of Illinois' 102 counties reported at least one case of a substance-exposed infant.

Between state fiscal years 1989 and 2002, the number of substance-exposed infant cases reported in the region covered by QCMEG increased from seven to 11 reported cases, although the number of cases reported peaked at 30 in 1997. Between state fiscal years 1989 and 2002, 191 cases, or 84 percent of all cases reported, were verified as involving prenatal drug use by a DCFS investigation. Mirroring the trend of reported cases, verified cases of substance-exposed infants in the QCMEG region also increased between 1989 and 2002, from one to 11 (Figure 26).

Figure 26
Cases of Substance-Exposed Infants in Rock Island County



Source: Department of Children and Family Services

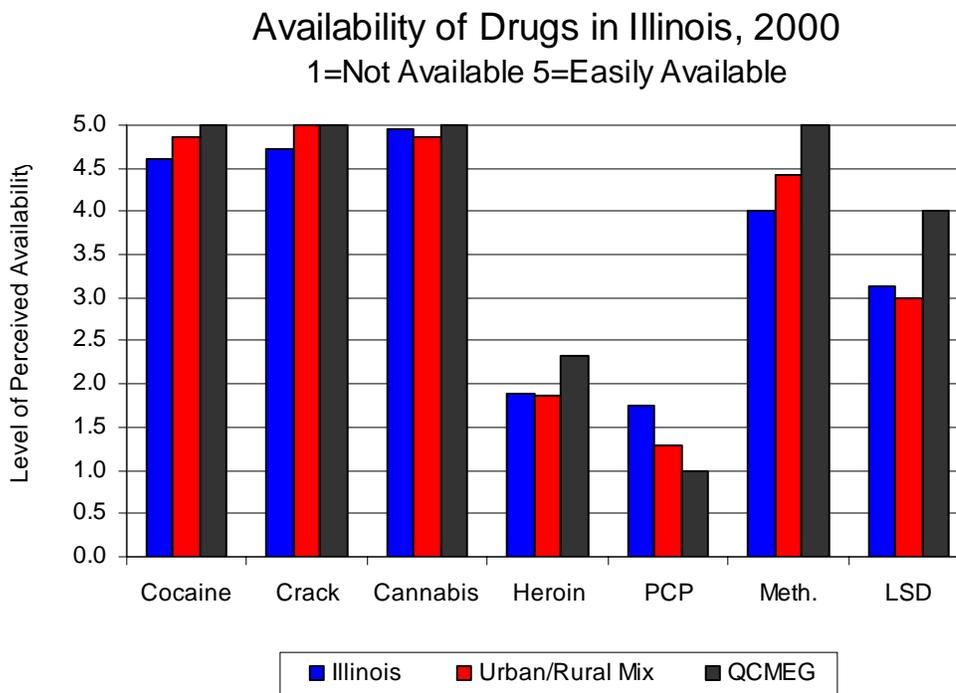
IX. Summary of Drug Situation

Although the distribution of illegal drugs is difficult to measure precisely, data obtained from criminal justice sources can be helpful in estimating drug availability. Information from a recent survey of Illinois drug enforcement units, as well as the most up-to-date data available on drug price, are presented as indicators of the drug supply in Illinois.

The Authority periodically conducts a survey of each MEG and task force in Illinois (the most recent was conducted in 2000) to gauge the perceived availability of drugs in the areas they cover. Questions were asked concerning the availability of specific drugs, and results were analyzed by region of the state. MEGs and task forces are classified as being either mostly urban, mostly rural or mixed urban/rural based upon the classification of the county(s) that each unit covers, and, for purposes of this report, are compared to the average of similar units.

According to QCMEG survey responses, cannabis, cocaine, and crack continued to be the most visible drugs on the street and were all reported to be “easily available” across all regions analyzed. Methamphetamine was reported as moderately available statewide, available to a lesser degree in the regions covered by all MEGs and task forces in mostly urban regions, and easily available in the region covered by QCMEG. The perceived availability of LSD was greater in the region covered by QCMEG than it was statewide or in the regions covered by other mostly urban MEGs and task forces. With an overall low perceived availability, PCP was more available statewide than in regions covered by other mostly urban MEGs and task forces and the in area covered by QCMEG itself. Heroin also had a lower perceived availability across all regions examined, but was available to a greater extent in the region covered by QCMEG (Figure 27).

Figure 27



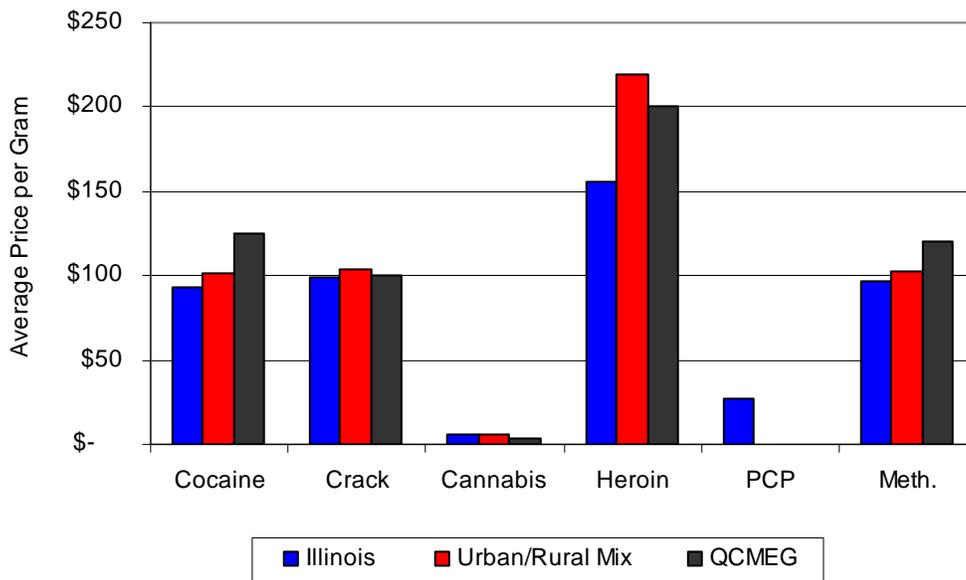
Source: Authority Survey of Illinois MEGs and task forces

Another market indicator that can be used to assess availability is drug price. Lower prices tend to suggest a sufficient supply to meet demand, while increasing prices indicate decreased availability.

Based on statewide surveys of MEG and task force units, the average price of cocaine in the region covered by QCMEG and in the regions covered by other mostly urban MEGs and task forces has increased, while statewide, the price decreased. Between the 1998 and 2000 surveys, the price of crack increased statewide and in the regions covered by other mostly urban MEGs and task forces, while it remained the same in the area covered by QCMEG. Overall, the price of cannabis fell statewide and in the regions covered by other mostly urban MEGs and task forces, but remained unchanged in the region covered by QCMEG. The price of heroin increased statewide and in the regions covered by other mostly urban MEGs and task forces, but more than doubled in the region covered by QCMEG. The price of methamphetamine rose across all regions examined, while the average price of PCP could not be determined because of a lack of data (Figure 28).

Figure 28

Price Per Gram in Illinois, 2000

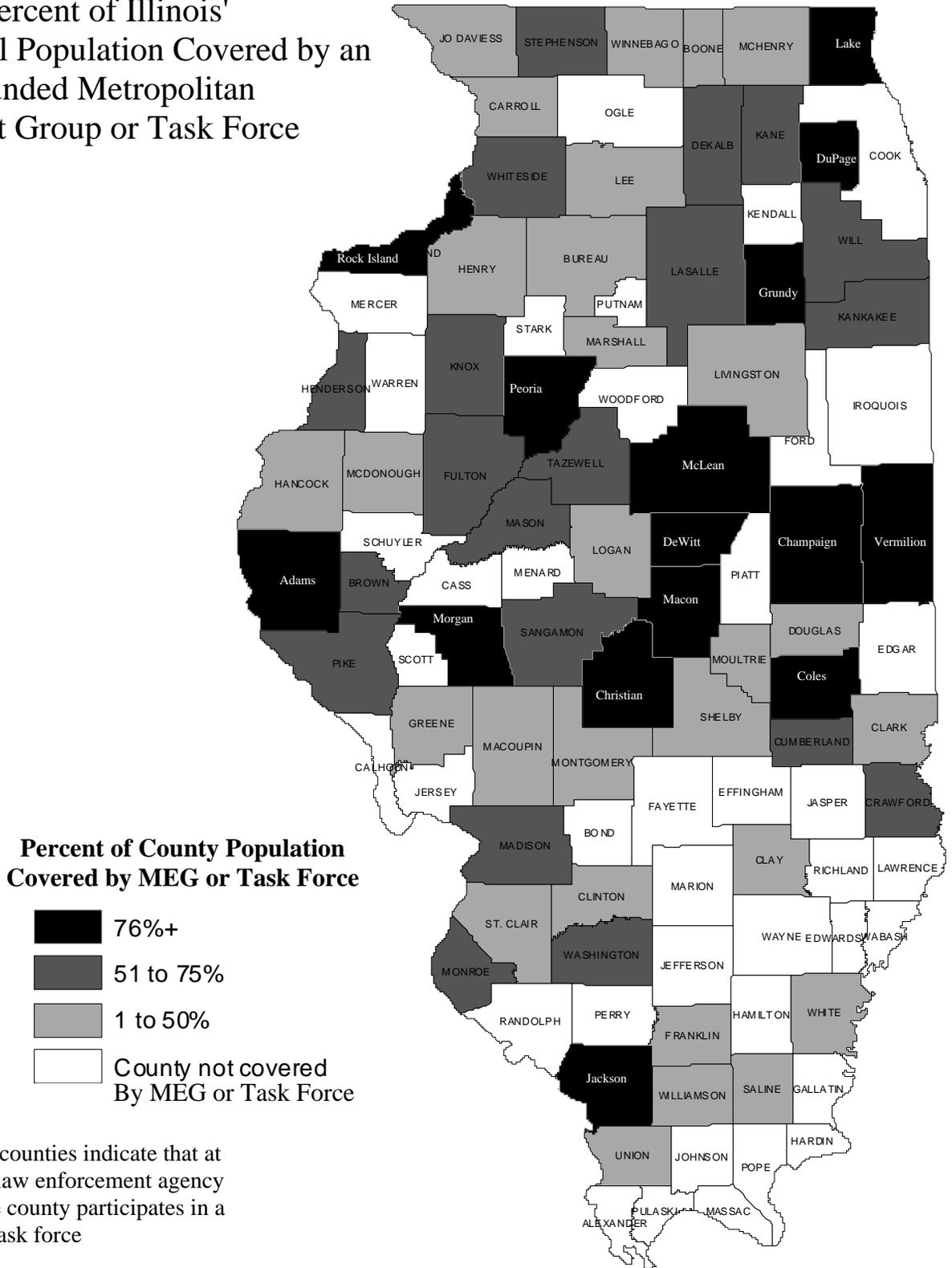


Source: Authority Survey of Illinois MEGs and task forces

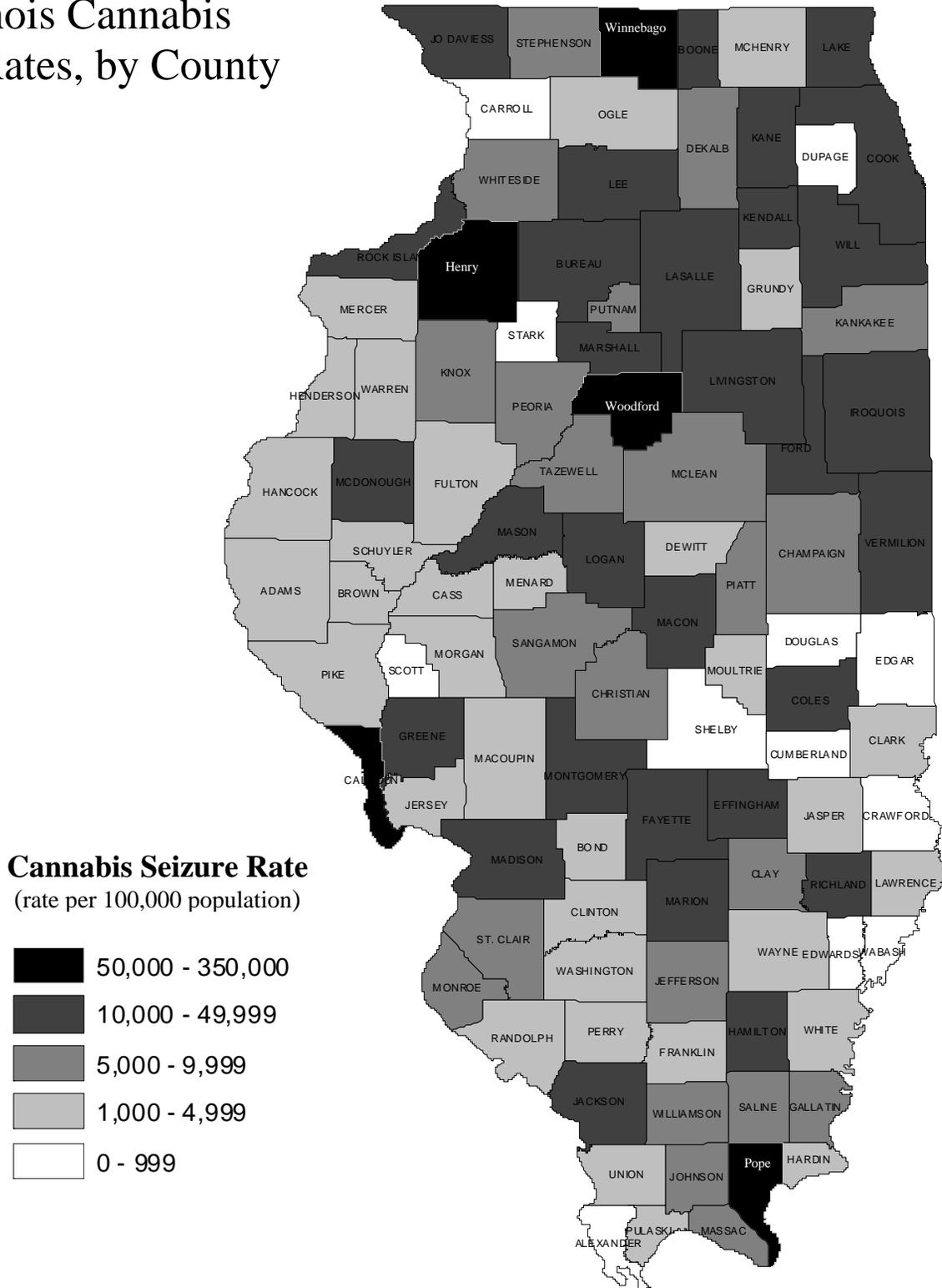
X. Appendices

Map 1

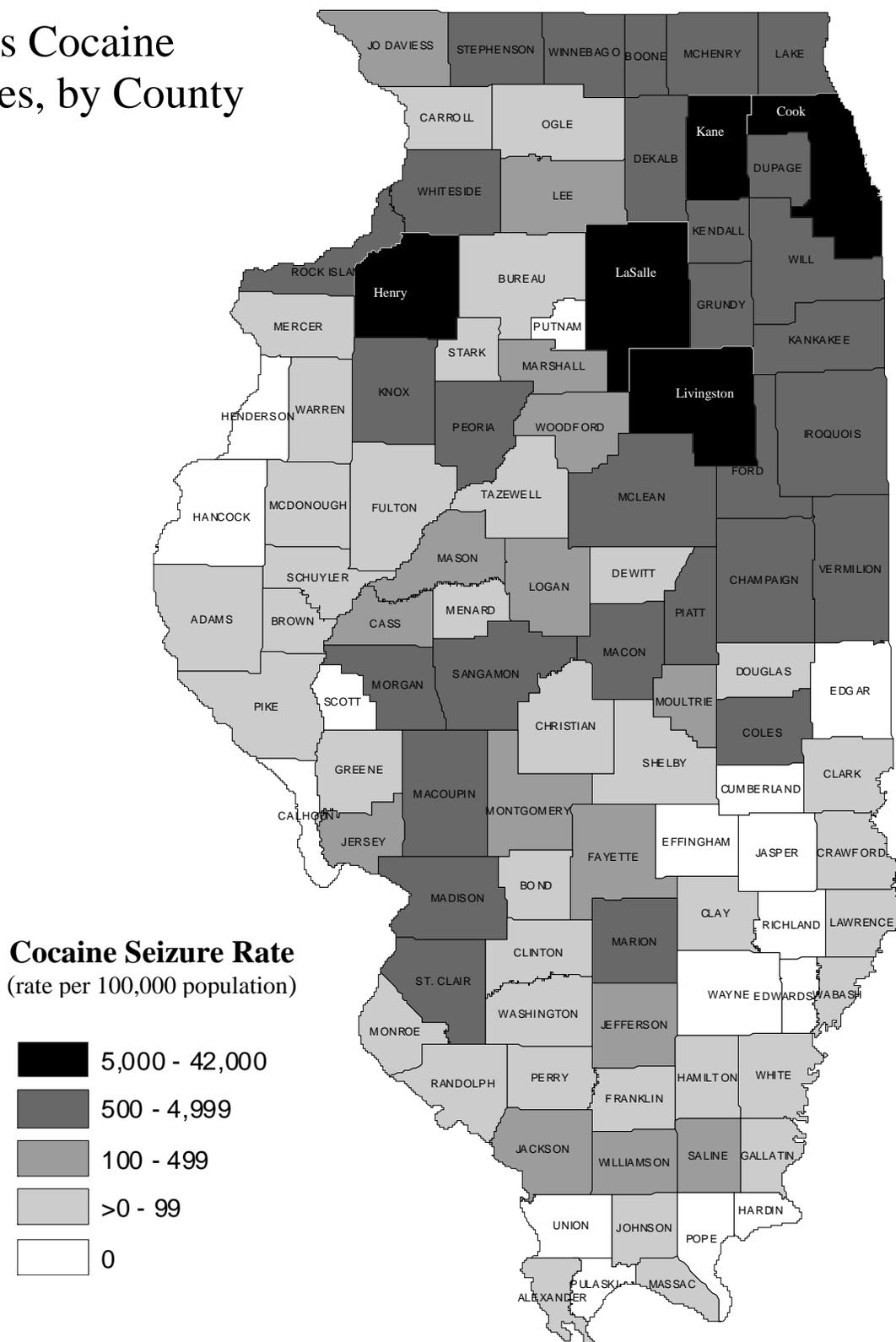
SFY 2002 Percent of Illinois' County-level Population Covered by an Authority-funded Metropolitan Enforcement Group or Task Force



2002 Illinois Cannabis Seizure Rates, by County

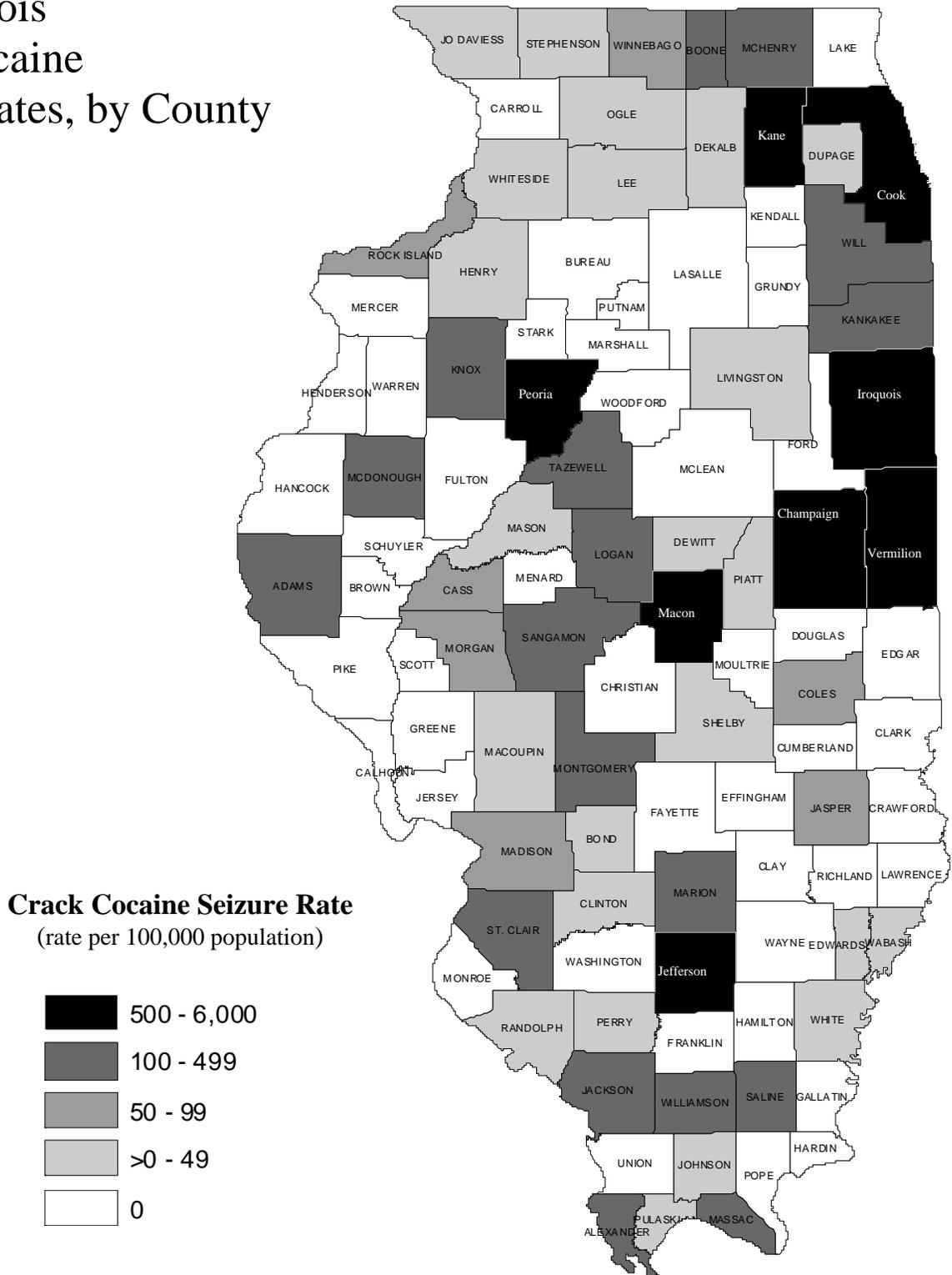


2002 Illinois Cocaine Seizure Rates, by County



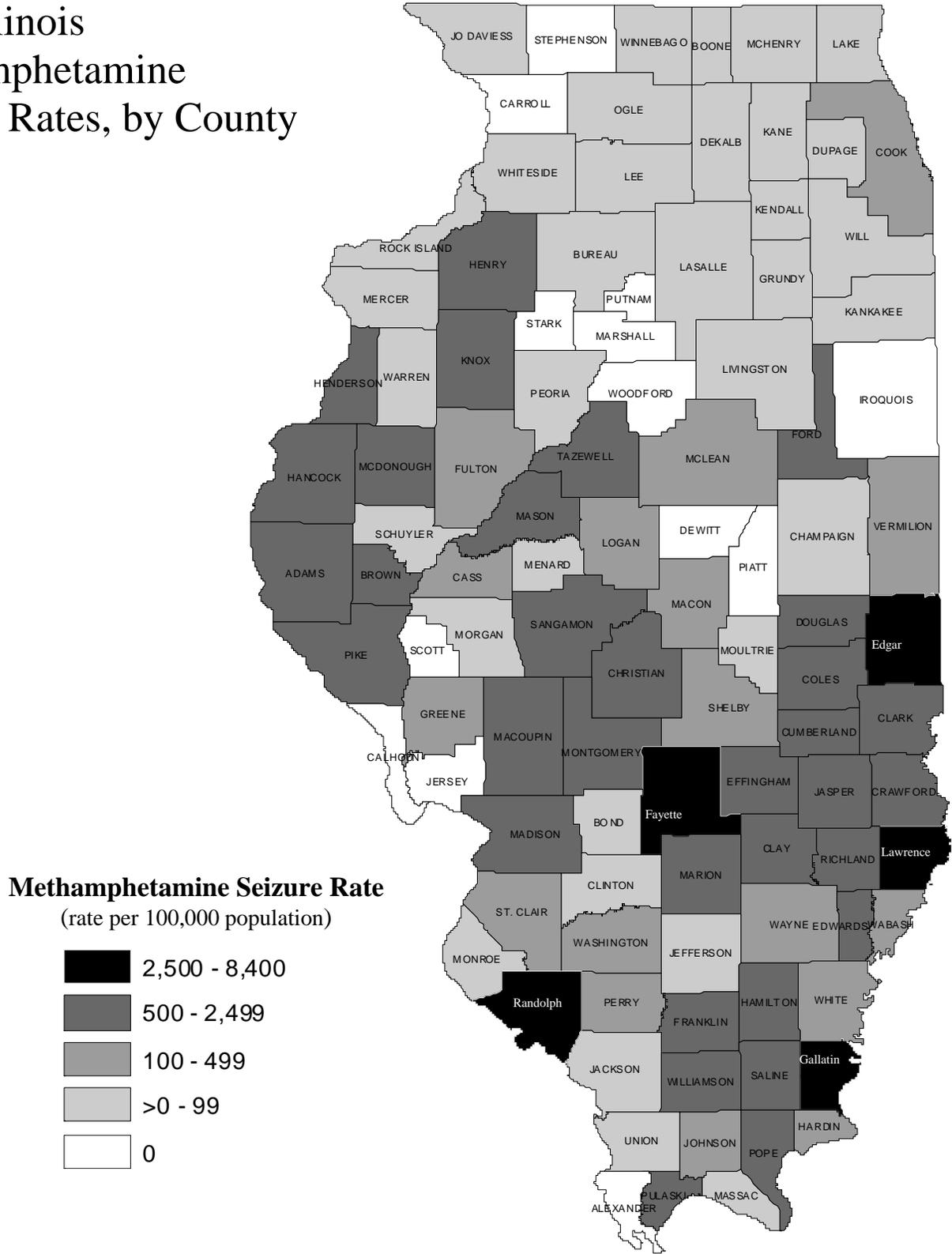
Map 4

2002 Illinois Crack Cocaine Seizure Rates, by County

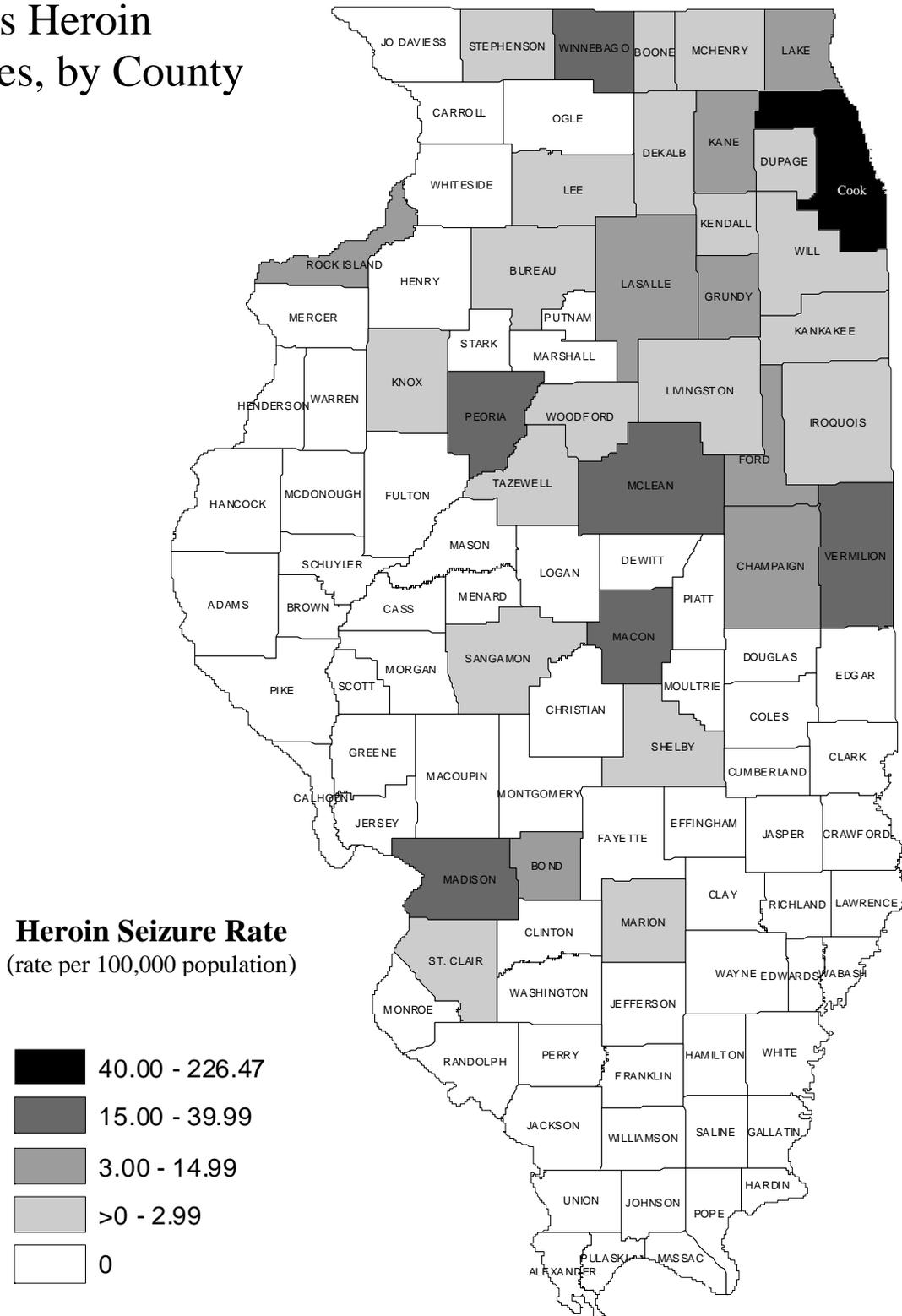


Map 5

2002 Illinois Methamphetamine Seizure Rates, by County



2002 Illinois Heroin Seizure Rates, by County



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