

How S&T is Supporting the DHS Counterdrug Mission and Combating Opioid Smuggling

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Through Executive Order 13784, the President established the Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis to counter the surge of drug abuse, addiction, and overdose plaguing the Nation. This public health crisis was responsible for more than 45,000 deaths in 2017, causing significant pain and financial harm to families and communities across America. As part of the comprehensive government effort to address the opioid crisis, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) established the Opioid/Fentanyl Detection Program to deliver improved drug detection capabilities to support DHS counterdrug missions. The physical nature of synthetic opioids presents immense challenges to detection, particularly in the context of the complexities of facilitating legitimate trade, including speed and high volume of commerce. In this effort, S&T collaborating with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), United States Coast Guard (USCG), other Federal agencies, and first responders to identify and develop capabilities, ranging from detection standards and advanced rapid detection technologies to analytics, to better detect opioids, like fentanyl, and increase capacity to disrupt the supply of drugs being smuggled into the United States. This talk will provide an overview of results and progress to date, including the Standard Specification for Field Detection Equipment and Assays Used for Fentanyl and Fentanyl-Related Compounds (ASTM WK66045), characterization of chemical signatures/profiles, and technology developments