

Message from Executive Director John Kanig

As we move into the Holidays, Deputy Director Doby and I had the opportunity to review the multiple submissions for the National HIDTA Awards. The quality and results of the investigations conducted by our initiatives reflect the commitment of member agencies to protect our communities. Despite challenges, we continue to enhance interagency collaborations, broaden training opportunities, and apply innovative approaches that improve public safety.

The Puerto Rico – US Virgin Islands HIDTA is dedicated to follow the mission and goals of the HIDTA Program while fostering trust within the communities we serve through outreach programs, educational seminars, and open communication. HIDTA strives to ensure that all voices are acknowledged, and every issue is addressed.

As we look forward into 2026, the Puerto Rico – US Virgin Islands HIDTA remains focused on growing strategies for our area of responsibility.

We wish everyone a safe and joyful holiday season!



PR-USVI HIDTA 4th Quarter 2025 Newsletter

PARTNER PROFILE

Assistant Special Agent in Charge (ASAC) Evan Martínez is a veteran of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) having begun his career in the DEA's Miami Division. After completing Basic Agent Training in Quantico, Virginia, Mr. Martínez was reassigned to the New York Division's Drug Enforcement Task Force, the oldest task force of its kind in the United States. There, Mr. Martínez sharpened his skills as investigator having led multiple high-level investigations into Mexican and Dominican Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO) operating in and around the New York City area.



In 2016, Mr. Martínez transferred to the DEA Caribbean Division's St. Thomas Resident Office (St. Thomas RO) in the United States Virgin Islands. Although beautiful in post cards, the US Virgin Islands serve as a major transshipment point of cocaine from South America into Puerto Rico and mainland USA. While assigned to the St. Thomas RO, Mr. Martínez received a promotion to Resident Agent in Charge. During this time, the St. Thomas team was the recipient of several awards including the National HIDTA Outstanding Investigative Effort Award.

Mr. Martínez was transferred to DEA's Curacao Country Office as the Country Attaché. In Curacao, Mr. Martínez led a team of agents, analysts and administrative professionals dedicated to investigating South American and Caribbean DTO's attempting to import various narcotics into the United States and Europe.

Mr. Martínez completed his headquarters assignment as an Inspector in the DEA's Inspection Division where he was responsible for audits and investigations that affected the agencies employees and programs. In 2024, Mr. Martínez was selected to serve as the first Assistant Special Agent in Charge seated in the US Virgin Islands. Currently, ASAC Martínez has oversight of all of DEA's eastern and southern Caribbean offices, as well as DEA's HIDTA Fajardo Office (eastern Puerto Rico) and a San Juan based enforcement group which specifically investigates drug related homicides.

WELCOME ABOARD TO FBI GROUP SUPERVISOR RANDY GONZÁLEZ



Mr. González was raised in Carolina, Puerto Rico. He received a Bachelor's Degree in International Economics from the University of Puerto Rico. He joined the FBI on September 2, 2007 as a Special Agent through 2011. In 2019, Mr. González was promoted to FBI Headquarters as Supervisory Special Agent (SSA) within CID's Public Corruption/Civil Rights Section overseeing civil rights investigations in the Northeastern Region.

During his career, SSA González served multiple duty assignments in Legat Bogota and Legat Santo Domingo. In 2021, SSA González was promoted to Assistant Legal Attaché of Legat Panama City where ALAT Gonzalez managed all Transnational Organized Crime investigations with nexus in Panama until 2025.

In October 2025, ALAT González was promoted Field Supervisory Special Agent of the FBI San Juan Criminal Enterprise and Homeland Security Task Force.

WELCOME ABOARD DIO JOSÉ BETANCOURT



The PR-USVI HIDTA welcomes Mr. José Betancourt as the new Drug Intelligence Officer (DIO) in Puerto Rico. He recently retired from DEA after over 20 years of dedicated service in the region. As an Agent, Mr. Betancourt rose to the rank of Acting Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the Caribbean Division in Puerto Rico. Mr. Betancourt held a number of roles in his DEA career to include Coordinator of the DEA Citizens Academy, Unit Chief, Group Supervisor of Technical Operations, and Money Laundering. Mr. Betancourt is a lifelong resident of Puerto Rico giving him a unique perspective of counterdrug operations, intelligence sharing, prevention, and education. More importantly, he cultivated numerous law enforcement contacts throughout his career which will be of great value in his new role as Drug Intelligence Officer. Welcome aboard.

LIAISON

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN COMMISSIONERS OF POLICE (ACCP) INTERSESSIONAL MEETING

The ACCP held their annual Intersessional Meeting on December 3rd and 4th in Miami Florida. Drug Intelligence Officer (DIO) Rodney F. Querrard and Deputy Director James Doby met with West Indies, Dutch, French and British LE Officials to discuss ongoing strategies in the Eastern Caribbean Region. DIO Querrard provided the Police Commissioners with the latest data on the National opioid crisis, as well as specific drug trends in our area of responsibility and the Caribbean. The ACCP is set to convene for their next General Meeting in Suriname in May 2026.



Left: ACCP members present and past pose for a picture at the beginning of the Intersessional Meeting. Right: DIO Rodney F. Querrard addressing the Commissioners and other invited guest of the growing drug trends and threats in the United States and the Caribbean.



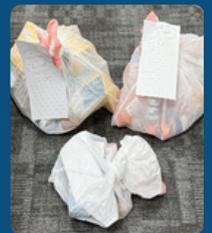
PREVENTION

USVI PRESCRIPTION DRUG DROP BOX PROGRAM

The US Virgin Islands HIDTA Prevention Initiative Prescription Drug Drop Box Program once again is proving to be a success. The program, which was launched on February 12, 2025, gives the people of the US Virgin Islands a safe way of disposing outdated, unneeded or expired medications. Prescription drugs are a gateway to more serious dependences and health issues. By utilizing the drop boxes, those participating in the program are doing their part in saving lives.

To date (12-17-2025), the program has collected a total weight of 74.06 kilograms (163.29 Pounds) of prescription drugs territory-wide.

The US Virgin Islands HIDTA Prevention Initiative is looking forward to another great year of collaboration between the Puerto Rico-US Virgin Islands HIDTA, US Virgin Islands Police Department, US Postal Service, Drug Enforcement Administration, and the US Virgin Islands Department of Health. "Working together to make a difference and save lives!"



Drop Box, St. John, and Prescription Drugs Recovered from Drop Boxes

US VIRGIN ISLANDS PREVENTION INITIATIVE "POSITIVE VIBES ALONE" 2025 SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

The US Virgin Islands HIDTA Prevention Initiative "Positive Vibes Alone" wrapped up its presentations on St. Croix for 2025 on October 28th. Presentations officially started on September 3rd. Attending and participating in the presentations were a total of 1716 students from 10 different schools, along with their teachers, counselors, and other staff. DIO Rodney F. Querrard is scheduled to complete the schools in the St. Croix district in early January. On November 17th, DIO Querrard was at the Yvonne E. Milliner-Bowsky Elementary School in St. Thomas for an interactive conversation with 66 students in two fifth grade classes. The initiative presentations gave the students an opportunity to participate in the discussion of topics such as substance abuse/misuse, peer pressure, violence, opiates (prescribed and illicit), edibles, marijuana, alcohol, vaping, bullying, and making positive life choices. School presentations for the St. Thomas/St. John district will commence in 2026.



DIO Rodney F. Querrard speaking with students during an interactive presentation.



OPIOID OVERDOSE RESPONSE TRAINING AND NALOXONE DISTRIBUTION

During November and December, Public Health Analyst (PHA) Francisco Torres-Cardona facilitated the Opioid Overdose Response (OOR) training to the Puerto Rico Police Department's Tactical Operations Division (PPR DOT in Spanish). In coordination with Lieutenant Jan C. Núñez-Miró, four sessions were scheduled in various facilities across the territory, including an informational presentation to the PPR Drug Division and municipal police officers at the Teatro Balboa in Mayagüez. Around 180 police officers attended the sessions and received naloxone kits provided by the Mental Health and Against Addiction Services Administration (ASSMCA in Spanish).



PHA Francisco Torres-Cardona presenting at the Teatro Balboa in the municipality of Mayagüez to 128 police officers from the western area.

The OOR training introduces public safety personnel to a variety of topics related to the opioid crisis, characteristics of opioids and other analgesics; reducing risks of accidental exposure to fentanyl and analogues; identifying and responding to opioid overdoses. Sessions include a brief practice on assessing, assisting and administering naloxone during an overdose, closing with a promotional presentation of the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP).

OVERDOSE DATA BULLETIN #2-2025

Our second Overdose Data Bulletin is available. The bulletin provides an overview of deaths by intoxication with psychoactive substances from 2018 to September 9, 2025, as well as demographic information, which include distribution by sex, average age and psychoactive substances registered as cause of death across all 13 police areas of Puerto Rico. The bulletin also includes suspected fatal overdose events reported to the Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP) from January to September 2025.

Using data provided by the Institute of Forensic Sciences (ICF in Spanish), the Overdose Data Bulletin highlights the impact of fatal overdoses involving psychoactive substances in the territory through graphics, tables and brief narratives. Updated editions will be available in October and April 2026, disseminated through the PR-USVI HIDTA mailing list. Tables and graphics organized by age, sex, municipality/police district and psychoactive substance are also available on request by contacting PHA Francisco Torres-Cardona at 404-401-4674 or ftorres@prvihadta.org.

OVERDOSE RESPONSE STRATEGY
PUBLIC HEALTH | PUBLIC SAFETY | PARTNERSHIP

OVERDOSE DATA BULLETIN, #2-2025

DEATHS BY INTOXICATION (OVERDOSE) WITH PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

As of September 9, 2025, a total of 4,394 individuals in Puerto Rico lost their lives by intoxication with psychoactive substances between 2018 and 2025. Data provided by the Institute of Forensic Sciences (ICF in Spanish) places fentanyl and other opioids (fent/ops) in 3,490 (79.4 percent) and cocaine in 2,849 (64.8 percent) of fatal overdoses. Table 1 shows a breakdown of psychoactive substances registered in fatal overdose cases since 2018.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
Psychoactive substances overdose deaths	372	423	525	672	781	783	626	212	4394
Fentanyl and other opioids	253	299	416	572	671	643	481	155	3490
Rx opioids	25	18	26	24	18	12	18	9	150
Cocaine	275	304	328	409	483	476	425	149	2849
Alcohol	49	32	63	62	68	35	47	20	376
Xylazine	13	18	70	181	145	166	138	36	767

Source: Forensic Sciences Institute, September 2025

Preliminarily, 626 overdose deaths occurred during 2024, with fent/ops registered in 481 (76.8 percent) and cocaine in 425 (67.9 percent) of the cases. Similarly, 212 persons died of psychoactive substances overdoses during 2025, registering 155 (73.1 percent) and 149 (70.3 percent) for fent/ops and cocaine, respectively. Graphic 1 shows a breakdown of psychoactive substances registered in fatal intoxication cases for 2024 and 2025.

GRAPHIC 1: PARTIAL DATA ON DEATHS BY INTOXICATION WITH PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES, 2024 AND 2025

Source: Forensic Sciences Institute, September 2025

Data for this bulletin is provided by the Institute of Forensic Sciences and disseminated by the Puerto Rico-US Virgin Islands High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (PR-USVI HIDTA). Data analysis, which includes narratives, graphics and tables, is the sole responsibility of Francisco A. Torres-Cardona, Public Health Analyst of the Puerto Rico Overdose Response Strategy team (PR ORS team).

Fatal overdose tables and graphics based on age, sex, municipality/police district and psychoactive substance are available on demand. Please contact Francisco at 404-401-4674 or ftorres@cdcfoundation.org for the data request.

ENFORCEMENT SUCCESS

ST. CROIX HIDTA

On March 11, 2025, the DEA/HIDTA St Croix Resident Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Homeland Security supported the US Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD) - Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) on the execution of Operation: Open Eyes. This operation, led by the VIPD, consisted of targeting four subjects to include a minor for violent offenses related numerous shooting incidents, murder, robberies, and extortion. These targets were involved in a drive-by shooting, one of which occurred in broad daylight at a fish market in Frederiksted, St. Croix that resulted in three people being shot.

Detectives of the CIB had secured several Virgin Islands Superior Court search warrants for multiple locations and arrest warrants for all four individuals, including the minor. VIPD detectives with support from DEA/HIDTA Task Force Officers executed a search warrant and an arrest warrant (for the Minor) at #204 Concordia West, Frederiksted, St. Croix, USVI.

During the search, it was discovered that the wanted minor's father, Shango ALLICK Sr., was conducting a drug trafficking operation involving the distribution of marijuana. No firearms were recovered during the course of that investigation.

Shango ALLICK Sr. was arrested and charged with possession of approximately total 5,640 grams of suspected marijuana. Commander VIPD-CIB requested assistance from DEA St. Croix Resident Office on the drug investigation for the purpose of prosecution.

On December 1, 2025, Shango ALLICK Sr. was before a Virgin Islands Superior Court Judge for a change of plea and sentencing. Pursuant to the plea agreement with the People of the Virgin Islands, ALLICK pled guilty to Count 1 (Simple Possession of greater than an ounce of Marijuana, violation Virgin Islands Code (VIC) Title 19 section 607(a)). The court accepted the plea of guilty and sentenced ALLICK to one (1) year incarceration, all suspended, and the defendant was placed on supervised probation for a period of one (1) year. ALLICK was also sentence to 40 hours of community services and fined \$500. This conviction was successful with the support of the DEA/HIDTA on providing investigative and analysis support in which the VIPD has limited resources at their disposal.



Left: Booking photo of Shango Allick; Below: Drugs seized during the search warrant.



ST. THOMAS INITIATIVE

The DEA, FBI, VIPD and CBP AMO conducted multiple undercover operations in the Cruz Bay area of St. John, US Virgin Islands. Cruz Bay is the most populated and frequently visited section of St. John, the area had become overrun with violence and open-air drug trafficking.

The DEA had received a request for assistance from the VIPD, as well as multiple complaints from concerned citizens and tourists who feared for their safety and well-being. The operation culminated in the arrest of 10 individuals, (all of which who had prior criminal history) and seizure of one (1) firearm, and 1/3 kilogram of cocaine.



Surveillance photo during operation.

OPIOID INITIATIVE

On November 17, 2025, DEA Caribbean Division HIDTA Task Force Group 4 (Opioid Initiative) received information that US Postal inspectors seized a package coming out of California to Cataño, Puerto Rico. The package was later opened pursuant to a federal search warrant and found to contain approximately two kilograms of a brown powder substance that tested positive for fentanyl. On November 20, 2025, DEA HIDTA IV Agents and US Postal Inspectors conducted a controlled pickup at the Post Office located in Cataño, PR. The target departed the Post Office with the package and was arrested by DEA Caribbean Division HIDTA IV and USPIS upon exiting the building. In the vehicle that the target was driving prior to retrieving the package, DEA located a Glock 27 pistol and three (3) magazines, one (1) of which was extended. Subsequently, agents learned that the target had previously received at least two more packages with suspected kilos of fentanyl smuggled from Mexico to California, USA. This investigation will continue with the support of USPIS, and PRPB.



*Left: Fentanyl seized;
Upper right: Surveillance photo of the target at the Post Office;
Lower right: Target being arrested.*



CARIBBEAN CORRIDOR STRIKE FORCE

Between October 1, 2024, and September 30, 2025, Caribbean Corridor Strike Force (CCSF) agents led an innovative, multi-layered investigation targeting a Self-Propelled Semi-Submersible (SPSS) cocaine trafficking network operating out of Guyana. Through advanced digital forensics, administrative subpoenas, iCloud search warrants, GPS exploitation, financial intelligence, and cooperator interviews, CCSF agents identified multiple targets and developed actionable evidence that linked them directly to a 2,700-kilogram cocaine shipment interdicted by the U.S. Navy.

Even though no devices were confiscated from anyone, including from the lookout, CCSF agents employed creative techniques to identify his phone number, recover his iCloud account, and obtain highly incriminating communications. This case demonstrates exceptional use of innovative investigative methods to dismantle a sophisticated, transnational criminal organization. (Continues on page 7.)



Cocaine seized during multi-layered investigation.

The innovative investigative techniques employed in this case generated significant prosecutorial outcomes across multiple jurisdictions. Three individuals directly connected to the interdicted SPSS were indicted based on digital, financial, and corroborated evidence developed by CCSF agents. The iCloud evidence was disseminated to DEA Paris and French law-enforcement authorities, prompting parallel international action. Additionally, results from the digital exploitation process revealed that the same criminal organization was responsible for constructing a second SPSS that had been interdicted in a separate investigation charged by EDNY.



*Self-Propelled
Semi-Submersible
seized during
operation*

That coordination enabled EDNY to indict two additional targets. Investigative efforts are expanding the impact of this case and demonstrating the effectiveness of the innovative methods applied throughout the investigation.

PR-USVI HIDTA STATISTICS JANUARY – DECEMBER 2025

ARRESTS 1,277	COCAINE SEIZED 27,585.05 Kg
HEROIN SEIZED 4.5 Kg	MARIJUANA SEIZED 313.75 Kg
CASH SEIZED \$220,642.06	ASSETS SEIZED \$810,450.00
FENTANYL SEIZED 17.8 Kg	FIREARM SEIZED 166

Investigative Support Center

The Investigative Support Center provides investigative and intelligence support to the PR-USVI HIDTA initiatives as well as federal and state law enforcement agencies in the region. The ISC leads the Watch Center and Deconfliction Programs, as well as provides extraction services through the Digital Forensics Laboratory.

For CY 2025, the ISC provided the following support:

WATCH CENTER 1,236	DIGITAL FORENSIC LAB 226
EVENT DECONFLICTIONS 2,145	CONFLICTS AVOIDED 223

**THE VIRGIN ISLANDS FUSION CENTER
IS NOW A PROUD MEMBER OF THE
GLOBAL SHIELD NETWORK**



**Expanding Intelligence
Protecting Paradise
Beyond the Shorelines**

For more information about Virgin Islands Fusion Center SHIELD
(VIFCSHIELD),

email us at fusioncenter@vi.gov

US VIRGIN ISLANDS PRESCRIPTION DRUG DROP BOX PROGRAM



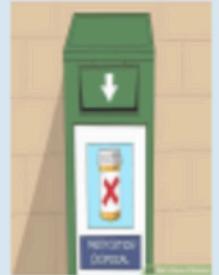
US VIRGIN ISLANDS PRESCRIPTION DRUG DROP BOX PROGRAM



"A US VIRGIN ISLANDS HIDTA PREVENTION INITIATIVE"

PRESCRIPTION DRUG DROP BOXES ARE CONVENIENTLY LOCATED AT "5" LOCATIONS IN THE US VIRGIN ISLANDS:

- St. Thomas:** Sugar Estate Post Office
Frenchtown Post Office
- St. Croix:** Kingshill Post Office
Gallows Bay Post Office
- St. John:** Cruz Bay Post Office



Let's all do our part to keep our community safe by utilizing the drop boxes to dispose of expired or unwanted medications! TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE, AND SAVE LIVES!



It's Time to
Clean Out
Your Medicine
Cabinet

In partnership with the US Virgin Islands Police Department, PR-USVI High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), Overdose Response Strategy/CDC, Department of Health, Drug Enforcement Administration, and the US Postal Service

Questions? Email us at VIHIDTA@GMAIL.COM

