NCADD
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, INC.

Cheap Heroin Abundant in New York, Officials Say in Wake of Hoffman’s Death

Cheap heroin is easy to find in New York City, according to law enforcement officials who spoke after actor Philip Seymour Hoffman was found dead with dozens of packages of heroin in his apartment.

The packages can sell for as little as $6 on the street, The New York Times reports. Some of the packages were branded with purple letters spelling out Ace of Spades, while others bore the mark of an ace of hearts, the article notes. At least five of the packages were empty and in the trash.

Heroin-related deaths rose 84 percent in New York City from 2010 to 2012.

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) officials say heroin seizures in New York state are up 67 percent over the last four years. In 2013, the agency's New York office accounted for nearly 20 percent of DEA seizures nationwide, with a value of approximately $43 million. During a raid last week in the Bronx before the Super Bowl, 33 pounds of heroin were found, along with hundreds of thousands of branded bags, some of them stamped "N.F.L." Heroin bags are often named for popular celebrities or luxury products, such as Lady Gaga or Gucci.

People using heroin in New York and around the country are increasingly young and middle class. Many of them started abusing prescription painkillers before moving on to heroin.

Earlier this month, the DEA joined an investigation into the source of a batch of heroin that killed 22 people in western Pennsylvania. The heroin involved in some of the deaths contained the synthetic opiate fentanyl, often used during surgery.

Heroin containing fentanyl has also begun to appear in New York City, according to Kati Cornell, a spokeswoman for Bridget G. Brennan, the special narcotics prosecutor for the city.

The use and abuse of drugs are serious issues that should not be ignored or minimized and we should not sit back and hope they just go away. If left untreated, use and abuse can develop into drug dependence. As a result, it is important to recognize the signs and

symptoms of drug abuse early. If you're worried that a friend or family member might be abusing drugs, Click here for some of the warning signs to look for