

# **NEWS RELEASE**

The Whitfield County Sheriff's Office Narcotic's Unit has concluded a three month covert investigation into the abuse of prescription drugs in our county. This investigation has resulted in numerous illegal drug charges being placed on 64 individuals, mostly for the sale of prescription medication. Our Narcotics Unit initiated this investigation after seeing a steady increase in arrest and overdoses (many involving deaths) due to the illegal use of prescription medication. We determined this is not just a local problem; prescription drug abuse is an epidemic at the national level. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, more prescriptions are being written than ever before; "There has been an increase of almost 50 percent in retail pharmacy prescriptions for opioids (the most frequently abused prescription drug class.)"

During the investigation we placed charges on individuals selling their prescriptions in many various ways and places. One female would make a monthly visit to her "pain doctor" and receive her monthly supply of pain medication. She would then have her customers meet her in the parking lot of a local drug store. Upon getting her prescription filled she would sell all her medication in the parking lot of the drug store, she was making over \$3000 a month selling her entire prescription. At one business on East Morris Street the owner (McHann) was selling his prescription medication from his business. One individual living in Macon had regular customers in Dalton and was making enough profit selling his prescription medication he would drive to Dalton on a regular basis. We had a few individuals getting methadone from Methadone Clinics and would then turn around and sell their methadone on the street.

On Thursday, September 26, 4 teams of 18 deputies along with Murray Co S.O. and DEA started arresting the suspects involved in the cases in an early morning roundup. As of the news release 55 individuals had been arrested for various levels and sells of VGCSA. A total of 64 warrants were obtained and more arrest are expected. The investigation continues.

## **Those charge as a result of the 3 month investigation:**

1. Colty Parker
2. Casey Cain
3. Jordan Williams
4. Chandler Henry
5. Mary Manseill

6. Ruben Sproles
7. Joseph Norman
8. Lamar Gamblin
9. Rosie Maddox
10. Rachel Watts
11. Crystal Watson
12. Matthew Shelton
13. James Carter Sr.
14. Logan Hartshorn
15. Tonya Smith
16. Victoria Gardepe
17. Kimberly Watkins
18. Larry Owens
19. Darrell Branson
20. Jason Saylor
21. Raymond McHan
22. Nathan Lewis
23. Paul Pellom
24. Michael Smith
25. Jeffery Hammonk
26. Junior Parker
27. Sonya Lewis
28. Michael Cross
29. Melanie Chambers
30. Harold "Lee" Burrell III
31. Phillip House
32. Rodney Stephenson

33. Linda Emberson
34. Jessica Brooker
35. Christie Morton
36. Tiffany Hamilton
37. Roy Byers
38. Lisa McDonald
39. Deborah Canales
40. Adam Cobble
41. Casey Mingle
42. David "Alex" Davis
43. Garry Eaton

**Others previously charged within the last 90 days:**

44. Brooklynn Richards
45. Shaun West
46. Sherona Sellers
47. Christy Martin
48. Jobbie Jones
49. Melissa Knight
50. Robert Reynolds
51. Jonathan Revels
52. Cleaston Hunter
53. John McBee
54. Teresa McCullough
55. Patricia Craig ( currently in custody in another County)

**Warrants have been issued for the following individuals who have yet to be picked up:**

1. Mira Poteet
2. Timothy Underwood
3. Dallas Patterson
4. Connie Cooper
5. Jeremy Hall
6. Linda Mullis
7. Ginger Morris
8. Andrew Collins
9. Sheri Ali

Scott Chitwood

Sheriff