

**BULLETIN NO.1, STATE OF NEW  
YORK, SECOND ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE NARCOTIC DRUG  
CONTROL  
COMMISSION, APRIL 15, 1920**

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**WALTER R. HERRICK**

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YORK, SECOND ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE NARCOTIC DRUG  
CONTROL  
COMMISSION, APRIL 15, 1920**



STATE OF NEW YORK

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FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

**Narcotic Drug Control  
Commission**



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J. B. LYON COMPANY, PRINTERS  
1919

**STATE OF NEW YORK**

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**SECOND ANNUAL REPORT**

**OF THE**

**Narcotic Drug Control  
Commission**



**WALTER R. HERRICK, Commissioner**  
**April 15, 1920**

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## SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

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APRIL 7, 1920

*To the Legislature of the State of New York:*

This Department was created by chapter 639 of the Laws of 1918, but as an administrative branch of the government did not commence operations until February 1, 1919, so that it has been in practical existence but a few months over a year.

Drug addiction has been properly called the scourge of modern times, and it is only within the last decade that sufficient knowledge of the subject has been had or interest taken in it to cause any corrective laws, either Federal or State, to be enacted, and that be it said to our shame, as drug addiction has been a matter of many years' growth. Few people realize that the United States in proportion to its population is the greatest consumer of habit-forming drugs of any country in the world, and yet we pride ourselves on our advanced civilization and education, our sanitary and moral mode of life.

The report of the Federal Investigating Committee, which is the latest authority extant, shows that the annual consumption of opium is 470,000 pounds; and on the basis of one grain of opium to a dose, that would provide every person in the country with thirty-six doses a year. Considering that a very large majority of the population never touch a bit of opium from one year's end to another, it can be readily realized by far the greater proportion of this consumption goes for the satisfaction of drug addiction. The much-talked-of cocaine, or, in the parlance of the drug addict, "snow," is produced from a certain variety of coca leaves. Of these leaves, there are sufficient imported into this country annually to produce 150,000 ounces of cocaine, enough to furnish every inhabitant with two-and-one-half doses. The report comments that it is estimated that only 25 per cent. of this amount is used in the legitimate medical or dental practice, so that the other 75 per cent. must be utilized for illicit purposes. These statistics do not include the amount of cocaine or opium which is smuggled into this country, of which no authoritative or accurate estimation can

be made. The smuggling proposition is one of the most difficult phases of drug addiction with which the authorities have to contend, for this is one of the greatest sources of illicit traffic in drugs, carried on, principally, through the so-called "peddlers," and the peddling situation is the worst side of the evil with which we have to cope.

#### WORK OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT

The name "Department of Narcotic Drug Control" is indicative of its work, for it is given control of the legitimate output and use of habit-forming drugs. It has within its province the licensing of manufacturers, wholesalers, apothecaries, veterinarians, physicians and dentists. Its work has increased vastly. Since I took office, clinics for drug addicts have been established in Buffalo, Binghamton, Corning, Hornell, Kingston, Middletown, Newburgh, Oneonta, Port Jervis, Rochester, Saratoga Springs, Syracuse, Utica and Watertown. Prior to my incumbency there were only two drug clinics in the State, one at Albany, established by my predecessor, and one in New York City, established under the supervision and direct instigation of Dr. Copeland, the commissioner of the city's Department of Public Health.

The office of the so-called drug clinic is dual, first, it tends to draw the addicts away from that class of doctors and apothecaries who commercialize the vice; second, it gives the Department an opportunity to come into personal contact with the addict and learn at first-hand his habits, needs and characteristics.

Our financial records show that in January, 1920, this Department took in, approximately, six times as much money as the Narcotic Bureau of the State Department of Public Health in the month of January, 1919; and, approximately, three times as much as in the month of February, 1919, the first month this Department was in existence; and, approximately, three times as much as in March, 1919, the month prior to the date of my appointment.

The total appropriation of the Department for maintenance and operation for the current fiscal year is.....	\$22,000 00
Receipts from registrations and official blanks from April 1, 1919, to April 1, 1920.....	27,130 40
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From the foregoing it can be seen that during the past calendar year, the Department has been practically self-supporting, as far as maintenance and operation is concerned; in other words, practically every cent of the taxpayers' money, which has contributed to the support of the Department, has been reimbursed to the State by the fees turned in to the State Treasurer by the Department.

The licenses issued by the Department are submitted in the following table:

Physicians . . . . .	10,364
Apothecaries. . . . .	4,415
Wholesalers and manufacturers. . . . .	286
Dentists . . . . .	2,275
Veterinarians . . . . .	342
Institutions and hospitals . . . . .	336
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One of the first questions that is asked by those who are interested in the subject of drug addiction is, How many drug addicts are there in the State? There have been various, and sometimes wild, estimates of the number. I think a safe and conservative approximation would be 39,000. The records of the Department show in round numbers 13,000 registered addicts. This number is composed of those who obtain habit-forming drugs through legitimate sources, that is directly from a doctor or on prescriptions issued by a doctor, filled by a druggist, or from the different clinics established throughout the State. To these figures should be added twice the number, which is an approximation of the users who obtain drugs from peddlers, or other illicit sources. Of course, this latter figure, as I have stated, is only an approximation. I base it on the percentage of addicts among the great number with whom I have personally conferred, who have admitted that they obtained their drugs from peddlers or other illicit sources. Between four-fifths and two-thirds of the registered addicts are located in the city of Greater New York, and the remaining fraction is scattered throughout the rest of the State. The larger the center of population, the greater the percentage of addicts.

New York City is peculiar in its form of drug addiction, for over 90 per cent. of its drug users are addicted to heroin, the strongest and most powerful of habit-forming drugs, the most detrimental in its effect upon the users, and the habit which is the most difficult to combat; whereas, in the other parts of the State about 93 per cent. of the drug users are addicted to morphine. There is, of course, an appreciable percentage of addicts who use cocaine only; but our records show that by far the larger number use cocaine in connection with morphine or heroin.

The registration by doctors and druggists, and the issuing of licenses to them, has increased since the enactment of the law nearly 70 per cent. This might seem to indicate an increased use of the drugs, but such is not the case. On the contrary, it is the result of the willingness of the doctors and druggists to comply with the requirements of the law, and submit to the control of the Department. Compared with the total number of doctors, druggists, dentists and veterinarians licensed, we find proportionately few who are openly defiant to the Federal and State laws. An investigation of a number of druggists shows that in the past nine months their sales of habit-forming drugs have decreased by nearly 50 per cent.

#### THE STORY OF DRUG ADDICTION

When a physician finds it necessary to administer morphine to quiet a patient who is not an addict but who is suffering pain, he is likely to administer one-twelfth or one-tenth of a grain. In some cases the doctor might, with reluctance, administer half a grain, and in very exceptional instances, one grain — although a grain is only 1/480 of an apothecary's ounce. Were he to administer two or three grains, he might kill his patient. If the person were to continue to take the small amount allowed, however, he might become habituated to larger and larger doses, and eventually may find it possible to consume an amount which would cause the death of a dozen persons not habitual users of the drug. Thousands of addicts in the State are taking fifteen grains of morphine per day, and hundreds use twenty-five and thirty grains per day. When the Department first began its work, in the spring of 1919, it was not at all unusual to find prescriptions for addicts calling

for sixty or seventy grains of morphine. Worse practices prevail with respect to heroin, a derivative of opium, and the most dangerous of the narcotic drugs. While it is sometimes allowed in a cough mixture containing only about one-fourth of a grain to a two-ounce solution, to be taken several times daily, many addicts are known to take ten, fifteen and twenty grains of this poison per day.

#### *Withdrawal Symptoms*

Yet, the startling and significant result of taking drugs is not merely the wreck of bodily health, it is rather that once a person has become habituated to narcotic drugs, however small the amount, he is in the clutches of a cruel and unrelenting master, whose brutal grasp is almost never shaken off unaided. An intense craving for the drug has been developed with the corresponding loss of self-control and every miserable or distressing symptom that man has ever experienced can now be reproduced in the head, neck, chest, abdomen, and extremities, if the drug is withheld for so short a period as a day or part of a day.

Threatening suicide and feigning collapse are among the usual phases of the addicts' cunning efforts to get a "shot." Recently two addict prisoners in the Tombs made a pact to feign suicide singly, one being left to give the alarm. The first one to experiment made a noose of the sheets which he tore into strips, and hung himself from the wall. When he became purple in the face, the second addict according to pact, yelled for the doctor, who came very promptly, cut the noose and administered the "shot." Encouraged by the success of his partner, the second addict undertook to hang himself. There was, however, no one to call the doctor for him, with the result, that he became a real suicide instead of a feigned one.

The following quotation from a work on pharmacology and therapeutics throws light on the dangerous enslavement of the addicts' will by the drug:

"The treatment of chronic morphine poisoning is not very promising. The will and self-control would seem completely paralyzed in many cases, and although the patient wishes to