

Uttam Dhillon  
*Drugs: Cost and Consequences* Press Conference  
Museum of Natural History and Science  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
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Thank you Director Marino for inviting me to be a part of this very special event, for your incredible partnership with the Drug Enforcement Administration, and for hosting the exhibit *Drugs: Cost and Consequences* at the very impressive Museum of Natural History and Science.

It's an honor to be here today to participate in the opening of this exhibit and to share the stage with so many prominent New Mexicans who all share the common belief that education is one of our greatest weapons against the scourge of drug abuse and addiction.

This exhibit is a perfect match with the Natural History and Science Museum's mission of igniting a passion for lifelong learning, particularly by young people, and especially about science. It also compliments your present special exhibit on the human brain. Because much of what we do at DEA, from scheduling drugs, to the development and enforcement of our nation's drug laws, relies on science. In large measure we make those choices based on the impact they have on our bodies, and our brains.

This exhibit tells the incredible story about what the nearly 10,000 men and women of DEA do every single day to protect our nation from illegal drugs. It connects their service and sacrifice in places as near as the streets of Albuquerque, and as far away as Afghanistan, to the goal of preventing the extraordinary pain, anguish, and loss that comes with drug use. This is the wasting away of lives — of the brains and the bodies of both young and old. It does not discriminate: drugs are an equal opportunity destroyer.

But the good news is none of the costs and consequences of drug use need to happen, and the strongest weapon we have in this fight is teaching the truth about drugs, and about the criminal organizations that traffic in the illegal narcotics that poison our communities. Answering those questions, and providing honest answers, is what visitors to this exhibit will find: when it comes to drugs, knowledge is power.

We are here in New Mexico because, like many other places around the country, you've experienced the violence that comes with drug trafficking, and the pain and death that follows, with nearly 500 New Mexicans dying of drug overdoses in 2017. This exhibit is one way we can inform the public, and help people of all ages make good choices by getting smart about drugs.

On behalf of the Department of Justice and the dedicated men and women of the Drug Enforcement Administration, thank you for your partnership and thank you for your willingness to host this important exhibit.

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