

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Guardsmen learn skills for unit substance abuse prevention

Story by Sgt. Jacqueline Fitzgerald
129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

SIoux FALLS, S.D. - Nearly 40 South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers completed the Counterdrug Joint Substance Abuse Program's Unit Prevention Leader course last week in Sioux Falls. Soldiers learned skills and procedures for drug testing at the unit level and acquired tips for recognizing and preventing substance abuse.

The 40-hour course covers regulations, drug and alcohol education and drug prevention and detection training.

"We put a lot into this training because it saves time in our decentralized testing," said Master Sgt. Paul Brosz, SDNG substance abuse coordinator. "We partner with the Highway Patrol for this class to ensure these Soldiers get the latest information from subject matter experts in the state."

The S.D. Highway Patrol helps support the education side of the course, by bringing in samples of what leaders should look for and what the common drugs look like. Staff Sgt. Rita Eel, 152nd Combat Support Battalion, has been through the course three times throughout her career and says the class has changed in positive ways.

"You learn a lot during the course and it broadens your knowledge, gives a different perspective," said Eel. "The instructors and speakers prove a lot through their experiences alone and the hands-on learning really shows what you need to be doing at the unit level. It has always been good training."

The Counterdrug Joint team also conducts Team Readiness Training during the course. This additional education, in the foundations of communication and tolerance, goes along with the UPL's role to deter and identify risks in their units.

"This training is just another tool to allow UPL Soldiers to be able to recognize and identify issues in the unit," said, Master Sgt. April Wollan, prevention treatment outreach coordinator. "That way they can communicate with the command and reach out to Soldiers who may be struggling in the unit."

South Dakota has more than 1,000 Soldiers trained in the UPL course; roughly a third of the state's Guard members.

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121128-A-WA247-001: Master Sgt. Paul Brosz (right), instructor for the South Dakota National Guard Counterdrug Joint Substance Abuse Program, explains to Staff Sgt. Nicole Polreis, 153rd Engineer Battalion and Sgt. Stephan Koopmans, 147th Forward Support Company, how easy it is for people to gather the ingredients to make drugs Wednesday, Nov. 28, 2012, in Sioux Falls. The substance abuse lesson was part of a week-long Unit Prevention course that teaches Soldiers skills and procedures for drug testing at the unit level along with tips for recognizing and preventing substance abuse. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Jacqueline Fitzgerald)(RELEASED)



121128-A-WA247-002: S.D. Highway Patrol Officer Shane Severyn, with the Northern Plains Drug Task Force, shows Sgt. Sarah Hauge of Det. 1, Forward Support Company and Sgt. Sean Fischer, 451st Fire Fighting Team, examples of drug paraphernalia, Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2012, in Sioux Falls. The weeklong Unit Prevention Leader course teaches Soldiers skills and procedures for drug testing at the unit level along with tips for recognizing and preventing substance abuse. (SDNG photo by Sgt. Jacqueline Fitzgerald)(RELEASED)

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