

# Harder drugs, more medical calls at SnowGlobe



Rock Med officials at SnowGlobe at times asked law enforcement to leave the tent because patients didn't feel comfortable. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

**By Kathryn Reed**

More medical issues at SnowGlobe this year could be the result of concertgoers using harder drugs.

That was the message Russell Liles, detective with South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Task Force, told the local drug coalition on Jan. 5.

Rock Med was in charge of all onsite medical issues for the three-day musical festival last month in South Lake Tahoe. The organization specializes in working at events like this. Exact

numbers of how many people were treated have not been released.

The medical group also had personnel at the transit center in case anyone who got on a bus at the concert venue needed attention before going to their lodging establishment.

Barton Memorial Hospital handled the more serious cases, like drug overdoses. The emergency room saw 116 patients total from 7pm to 7am on the three nights of the music festival, of which one-third were estimated to be SnowGlobers.

“The majority of patients treated at Barton from SnowGlobe were due to weather exposure, alcohol use or substance use,” Mindi Befu, Barton spokeswoman, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “There was an increase in SnowGlobe patients when the Rock Med tent onsite at the event was no longer available for service.”

Molly – aka MDA and ecstasy – remains the drug of choice for this crowd. It makes people extremely thirsty. That’s why lines are long to refill water bottles.

The amnesty box was nearly empty. This is where people can dump their illegal drugs without any questions being asked or threat of arrest.

“I think they are getting better at smuggling drugs in,” Liles said.

People were using DMT (dimethyltryptamine), according to Liles. It is a psychedelic drug. He added this was the first year officers saw the hallucinogen ketamine (aka Special K). It’s an animal tranquilizer that has effects similar to PCP that is often used with ecstasy.

Officers noticed significantly less marijuana use this year compared to the past when it was almost like getting a contact high walking the grounds.

What alarmed Liles, though, was the number of minors cited for

possession of alcohol – 104.

It's estimated 35,000 people attended the Dec. 29-31 event on the ball field at Lake Tahoe Community College.