Decreases in the perceived harmfulness of using a drug are often leading indicators of future increases in actual use of that drug (see CESAR FAX Volume 16, Issue 4). Thus, it is disconcerting that data from the 2006 national Monitoring the Future survey show that the percentage of eighth grade students perceiving a "great risk" of harm in using ecstasy, LSD, or inhalants once or twice continues to decline. The percentage of students who perceived a great risk of harm from using ecstasy decreased from 43% in 2004 to 33% in 2006, while the perceived harmfulness of LSD use has been declining since 1997, reaching a low of 24% in 2006. Inhalant use began to decrease about five years ago, from a high of 46% in 2001 to 36% in 2006. The study authors suggest that these trends may reflect "generational forgetting" of the dangers of these drugs, “leaving the newer cohorts vulnerable to a resurgence of use” (p. 7).

*Perceived risk: The percentage reporting that people run a “great risk” in harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they try a drug once or twice.

NOTE: Data on the perceived risk of LSD use began being collected in 1993; that of ecstasy use in 2001.