Marijuana Most Frequently Detected Drug Among Tested U.S. Workforce

More than one-half (59%) of positive workplace drug tests conducted in the first six months of 1997 were positive for marijuana, according to data from SmithKline Beecham Clinical Laboratories (SBCL). The only other drugs detected with any frequency were cocaine (18% of all positive tests), opiates (8%), and tranquilizers (5%); all other drugs were each detected in less than 5% of the positive tests. The overall rate of drug positives for the first six months of 1997 was 5%, continuing a decline evident since SBCL began conducting workplace drug tests in 1987 (see CESAR FAX, Volume 5, Issue 40).

Drug Distribution of Positive Urine Tests Among U.S. Workforce
Tested by SmithKline Beecham Clinical Laboratories, January - June 1997

Marijuana 59%
Cocaine 18%
Opiates 8%
Tranquilizers 5%
Other* 10%

*The category “Other” includes amphetamines (4%), barbiturates (3%), methadone (0.7%), methaqualone (0.01%), PCP (0.4%), and propoxyphene (1.6%).


Access Additional Workplace Drug Information at CESAR’s Web Site
CESAR’s web site contains numerous articles and statistics on workplace drug issues, including a survey of Maryland businesses and sample policy statements for workplace drug abuse programs. Go to www.bsos.umd.edu/cesar/cesar.html and select CESAR BOARD, then Workplace.