

Drug Early Warning System

Working Together to Identify Emerging Drug Trends in Maryland

MARYLAND DRUG EARLY WARNING SYSTEM: DEWS Fax Volume 3

2001

CESAR
Center for Substance Abuse Research
University of Maryland
4321 Hartwick Road, Suite 501
College Park, MD 20740
301-405-9770 Fax: 301-403-8342
cesar@cesar.umd.edu
www.cesar.umd.edu

Drug Early Warning System (DEWS) Project Overview

Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend implemented the Drug Early Warning System (DEWS) in mid-1998 in response to a perceived shift in drug-use patterns in suburban counties such as Carroll and Harford. Currently, DEWS collects quantitative and qualitative data through four projects: Juvenile Offender Population Urine Screening (OPUS), Maryland Drug Scan, Rapid Response Field Unit, and Substance Abuse Indicators. By collecting data through these programs, the DEWS staff can detect and define current trends with real-time data. DEWS provides state, county, and local policymakers, program administrators, and community activists with ongoing, timely information about drug use patterns in Maryland to assist them in developing coordinated responses to meet local needs.

Since 1998, the DEWS studies have been staffed by a variety of dedicated project directors, research assistants, interviewers, and other staff whose efforts have supported the steady growth and expansion of DEWS including:

CESAR Director – Eric D. Wish

DEWS Coordinator – Erin Artigiani

Substance Abuse Indicators – Dana Lehder, Craig Winters, Kendra Smoak, Maggie Hsu

Drug Scan – June Moore, Dorian Broadus

OPUS – Lis Fost, Jill Choyka, Melanie Westover, Megan Fitzgerald

DEWS Fax – Wanda Hauser, Kara Johnson

DEWS News – Patty Lemley

DEWS strives to ensure that information collected is promptly distributed. Findings are disseminated through various reports, including the DEWS News and monthly DEWS faxes. To be added to the fax distribution list, contact DEWS at 301-405-9770, 301-403-8342 (fax), or dews@cesar.umd.edu. Past issues of the *DEWS Fax* are available online at www.dewsonline.org.

Acknowledgements

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The efforts of many agencies and contacts across the State support the DEWS projects. Without their dedication and commitment, the continuing success of this unique monitoring system would not be possible.

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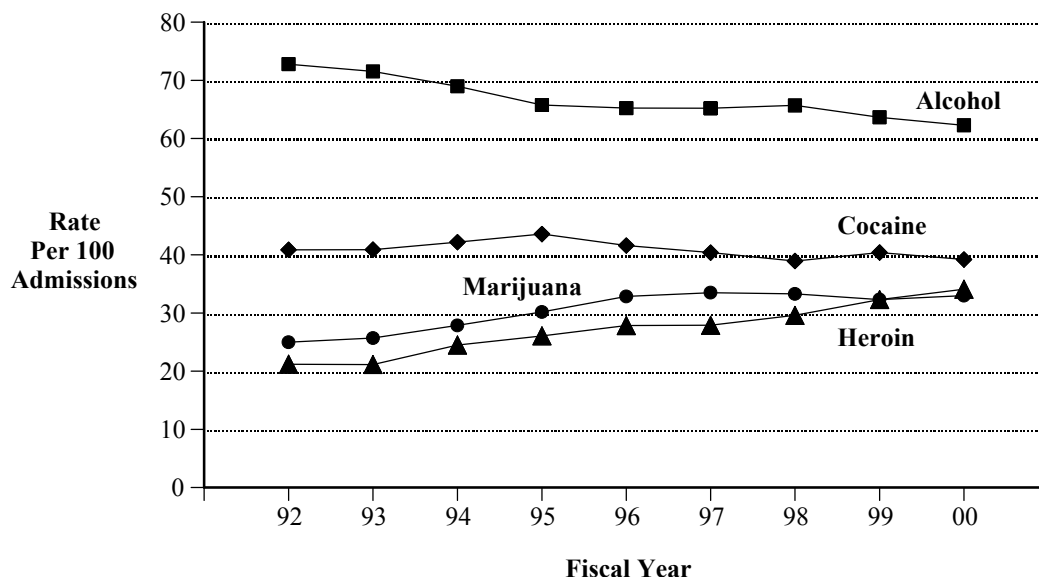
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Heroin Mentions Increase Among Maryland Treatment Clients, Now Rival Marijuana Mentions

Heroin is now slightly more likely than marijuana to be reported as a problem by clients entering or leaving Maryland treatment programs, according to data from the Maryland Substance Abuse Management Information System (SAMIS). In FY2000, there were 34.1 heroin mentions per 100 admissions to Maryland substance abuse treatment programs, compared to a rate of 33.0 marijuana mentions per 100 admissions. While alcohol and cocaine continue to be the substances most frequently mentioned as problems among treatment clients, the rate of mentions of these drugs, as well as marijuana, have remained stable or declined during the past few years. At the same time, the rate of heroin mentions has been increasing. In FY2000, the number of heroin mentions increased in 14 of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions.

**Rate of Alcohol, Cocaine, Heroin, and Marijuana Mentions (Per 100 Drug Treatment Admissions),
Maryland Substance Abuse Treatment Programs, FY1992-FY2000**



NOTES: A mention is a report by a client of a substance as a problem. Up to three substances may be reported for each admission. All Maryland treatment programs are required to report to SAMIS as a condition of certification and funding.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from the Substance Abuse Management Information System (SAMIS), Maryland Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration (ADAA). For more information, contact Erin Artigiani of CESAR at 301-403-8329.

Maryland's Ecstasy Action Plan

Since DEWS first detected ecstasy use in two counties in 1998, the number of counties reporting ecstasy as an emerging drug has increased to 18 in 2000. In September 2000 Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend announced a State Ecstasy Action Plan designed to reduce the use and availability of ecstasy. The Action Plan is built around four objectives: 1) informing and educating the public; 2) intensifying and focusing law enforcement efforts; 3) ensuring proper diagnosis and treatment of ecstasy users; and 4) assessing and monitoring ecstasy use. Following are highlights of some of the actions taken to meet each of these objectives:

Prevention/Education

- To educate the public about ecstasy use in Maryland, a web page (www.ecstasyfacts.org) has been established, and a public service announcement is currently being aired on local television stations.
- Ecstasy information and prevention materials have been distributed to schools, and an educational video is being developed for use in grades 6 through 12.

Enforcement

- The Maryland State Police (MDSP) Drug Enforcement Command has established a core group of 10 narcotics investigators who travel statewide to investigate raves and cases involving club drugs.
- The MDSP is currently studying the existing penalties for ecstasy-related offenses and anticipates presenting legislation during the 2001 Maryland General Assembly Session to increase penalties for ecstasy possession and other related offenses.

Treatment

- Special ecstasy training workshops for all State-certified treatment programs and county treatment and prevention coordinators were held in the fall of 2000. In addition, an Emerging Drugs Training Network has been formed to conduct ongoing training for hospital and emergency personnel.
- Ecstasy information has been distributed to state treatment practitioners and hospitals, and information on ecstasy has been posted on the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration's web site.

Monitoring Use

- DEWS interviewers continue to attend raves and interview attendees as part of the Ecstasy Rave Study.
- DEWS staff are receiving regular updates of MDSP crime lab ecstasy seizures and Maryland Poison Center calls regarding ecstasy, ketamine, and rohypnol.

SOURCE: Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), Center for Substance Abuse Research. For more information, contact Erin Artigiani of CESAR at 301-403-8329.

Cecil County OPUS Report Now Available:

Continued Popularity of Marijuana Use; Increasing Use of Ecstasy

As part of the Offender Population Urine Screening (OPUS) program, 46 youths processed in the Cecil County Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Intake Office were interviewed and tested by urinalysis for illicit drug use between February and August 2000. Following are highlights of the report for the three drugs most frequently discussed by these youth—ecstasy, marijuana, and heroin.

- According to one 17-year-old male, “**Ecstasy** is coming around more often than it used to and it’s staying longer each time.” Several youths in Cecil County reported that ecstasy has grown increasingly popular.
- More than one-fourth (28%) of the youths tested positive for **marijuana**. Youths report that there is no specific age, gender, or social group that uses marijuana. When asked about new trends, youths reported that Killer Weed (KW) is marijuana dipped in embalming fluid. This combination, according to one 15-year-old male, “is like PCP. It makes you feel strong, but high.” (For more information on the use of marijuana, embalming fluid, and PCP, see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 7, Issue 19).
- While youths reported that **heroin** is easy to get in Cecil County, several stated that heroin users belong to a specific social group or reside in one specific town in the county. Most respondents said that they and their friends were scared of heroin, and no youths tested positive for opiates.

A full copy of the Cecil County OPUS report is available on the DEWS website at www.cesar.umd.edu/dews.htm.

NOTE: These drug use patterns may not be typical of the general youth population in this county. However, prior research indicates that drug use by juvenile offenders may provide advance warning of epidemics in the general population.

SOURCE: Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), Offender Population Urinalysis Screening program (OPUS), Center for Substance Abuse Research. For more information, contact Erin Artigiani of CESAR at 301-403-8329.

OPUS: Intake Study

The Offender Population Urinalysis Screening (OPUS) program was established to monitor drug use among Maryland’s juvenile offenders through voluntary and anonymous interviewing and drug testing of youths at Maryland’s Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) intake and detention facilities. OPUS began collecting data from juveniles processed by DJJ intake site staff in May 1999.

Prince George's County OPUS Report Now Available: *Forty Percent of Youth Offenders Test Positive for Marijuana*

Between March and May 2000, 50 youths processed in the Prince George's County Department of Juvenile Justice Intake Office were interviewed and tested by urinalysis for illicit drug use. Following are highlights of the report for the three drugs most frequently discussed by these youth—marijuana, ecstasy, and cocaine.

- Forty percent of the youths tested positive for **marijuana**. This rate is higher than that found in other counties (which have ranged from 17% to 29% positive) and approaches the 44% marijuana-positive rate found among Baltimore City juvenile offenders (see *DEWS Fax*, Volume 2, Issue 10). According to one 16-year-old male, "Everyone smokes it. You see bags lying around the school parking lot."
- More than 50% of white and hispanic youth offenders tested positive for **marijuana**, compared to 32% of black youth offenders.
- Many youths noted the danger associated with impure **ecstasy** (MDMA) pills. According to one 17-year-old male, "Sometimes they mix in heroin, coke, mescaline, or speed. But there's always some MDMA in the pills."
- The majority of the youths reported that powder and crack **cocaine** "isn't really popular with high school kids," and they believe these substances are primarily used by older people.

A full copy of the Prince George's County OPUS report is available on the DEWS website at www.cesar.umd.edu/dews.htm.

NOTE: These drug use patterns may not be typical of the general youth population in this county. However, prior research indicates that drug use by juvenile offenders may provide advance warning of epidemics in the general population.

SOURCE: Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), Offender Population Urinalysis Screening program (OPUS), Center for Substance Abuse Research. For more information, contact Erin Artigiani of CESAR at 301-403-8329.

OPUS: Intake Study

The Offender Population Urinalysis Screening (OPUS) program was established to monitor drug use among Maryland's juvenile offenders through voluntary and anonymous interviewing and drug testing of youths at Maryland's Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) intake and detention facilities. OPUS began collecting data from juveniles processed by DJJ intake site staff in May 1999.

Howard County OPUS Intake Report Now Available:

Reports of Ecstasy and Marijuana Use at School

Between June and August 2000, 50 youths processed in the Howard County Department of Juvenile Justice Intake Office were interviewed and tested by urinalysis for illicit drug use. Following are highlights of the recently released report.

- **Ecstasy** was the most frequently mentioned drug. It “has become more socially accepted and is used at parties and at school” (p. 7). Several youths mentioned that ecstasy may be cut with other drugs, such as cocaine or heroin.
- Several youths stated that **marijuana** use in school has increased and that youths frequently come to school high, get high in school, and obtain marijuana in school. Eighteen percent of the youths tested positive for marijuana.
- **Cocaine** use is more accepted than heroin use. While there does not seem to be a lot of cocaine or heroin use in the county, and many youths report knowing someone who uses one of these drugs. None of the youths interviewed tested positive for cocaine or heroin.
- Several youths expressed the belief that **LSD** and psychedelic **mushrooms** are increasing in popularity.
- According to youths interviewed, **prescription drugs**, such as Ritalin, Adderall, and Percocet, are crushed and snorted or taken intravenously.

A full copy of the Howard County OPUS report is available on the DEWS website at www.cesar.umd.edu/dews.htm.

NOTE: These drug use patterns may not be typical of the general youth population in this county. However, prior research indicates that drug use by juvenile offenders may provide advance warning of epidemics in the general population.

SOURCE: Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), Offender Population Urinalysis Screening program (OPUS), Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR). For more information, contact Erin Artigiani of CESAR at 301-403-8329.

OPUS: Intake Study

The Offender Population Urinalysis Screening (OPUS) program was established to monitor drug use among Maryland’s juvenile offenders through voluntary and anonymous interviewing and drug testing of youths at Maryland’s Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) intake and detention facilities. OPUS began collecting data from juveniles processed by DJJ intake site staff in May 1999.

Glossary of Maryland Street Drug Terms Now Available Online

Since 1999 Maryland's Offender Population Urinalysis Screening (OPUS) program has been conducting interviews with juvenile arrestees. Many of the youths report popular drug slang or street terms during the interviews. For the first time, a comprehensive listing of these terms is available online at www.cesar.umd.edu/www2root/dews/streetterms.shtml. The listing, which currently contains more than 75 street terms for drugs, is presented in various ways: by term, by drug type, by county, and by topic (e.g., terms relating to cost). Following are some of the terms presented in the glossary.

Maryland Street Drug Terms Reported by Juvenile Arrestees in Select Counties

Drug	Term	Location Reported
Acid/LSD		
	Aeon Flux	Baltimore County, Carroll
	Glass	Carroll
	South Parks	Montgomery
	Timothy Leary	Baltimore County
Ecstasy		
	007	Carroll
	Batmans	Anne Arundel
	Supermans	Baltimore County
	Tweety Birds	Anne Arundel, Carroll
Heroin		
	Blue Star	Baltimore City
	Don King	Baltimore County
	Raw	Baltimore County
	Rush Hour	Baltimore City
Marijuana		
	Chocolate Tai	Anne Arundel
	Hydro	Anne Arundel, Harford, Howard
	Northern Lights	Howard County
	Sex	Anne Arundel

SOURCE: Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), Offender Population Urinalysis Screening program (OPUS), Center for Substance Abuse Research. For more information, contact Erin Artigiani of CESAR at 301-403-8329.

Anne Arundel County OPUS Intake Report Now Available:

LSD Reported to Be Increasingly Popular

Between November and December 2000, 50 youths processed in the Anne Arundel County Department of Juvenile Justice Intake Office were interviewed and tested by urinalysis for illicit drug use. Twenty-four percent of the youths tested positive for at least one drug, primarily marijuana. Following are highlights of the report.

- As in other counties, **ecstasy** was reported as a popular drug that is thought by the youths to be cut with other drugs, such as heroin, cocaine, or speed. Brand names of ecstasy included Egyptians, Tutus, Batmans, Diamonds, Tweety Birds, and X-Pills.
- Eighteen percent of Anne Arundel county youths tested positive for **marijuana**. Many youths reported that marijuana should not really be considered a drug because “it comes from the earth” (p. 7).
- Several youths reported that **LSD** and **ecstasy** were both increasingly popular. According to one 16-year-old male, “Paper is the most common [form of LSD]. Liquid’s the best--you can put it onto sugar cubes, gum, or Altoids” (p. 7).
- Youths report that **prescription pills**, such as Percocet, Hydrocodeine, Ritalin, and Valium are taken with beer to enhance the effects.

A full copy of the Anne Arundel County OPUS report is available on the DEWS website at www.cesar.umd.edu/dews.htm.

NOTE: These drug use patterns may not be typical of the general youth population in this county. However, prior research indicates that drug use by juvenile offenders may provide advance warning of epidemics in the general population.

SOURCE: Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), Offender Population Urinalysis Screening program (OPUS), Center for Substance Abuse Research. For more information, contact Erin Artigiani of CESAR at 301-403-8329.

OPUS: Intake Study

The Offender Population Urinalysis Screening (OPUS) program was established to monitor drug use among Maryland’s juvenile offenders through voluntary and anonymous interviewing and drug testing of youths at Maryland’s Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) intake and detention facilities. OPUS began collecting data from juveniles processed by DJJ intake site staff in May 1999.

An Update on GHB Use in Maryland and the Nation

Initial toxicology reports indicate that GHB was present in the blood of a University of Maryland College Park student who died on September 5th. While the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner currently does not routinely test for GHB, they will begin testing for it on a case by case basis within six months.

What is GHB?

Gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) is a central nervous system depressant that was initially sold in health food stores to stimulate muscle growth and burn fat. GHB, also known as “G” or “liquid ecstasy,” is often used in social environments, such as parties, clubs, and raves, to break down inhibitions and produce euphoria. (For more information about GHB, see the April 1999 Special Edition of the *DEWS Fax*.) When used with other substances, including alcohol, the effects are intensified. GHB overdose can cause nausea, vomiting, unconsciousness, slowed heart rate, respiratory depression, seizures, hypothermia, coma, and death.

What is the legal status of GHB?

In 1990 the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) declared GHB unsafe and illicit and in 1999 the FDA issued a voluntary recall of GHB. In March 2000, GHB was federally classified as a Schedule I drug.

GHB Use in Maryland

The DEWS Drug Scan Project initially reported GHB use in two Maryland counties in 1998. In 2000, 15 counties reported GHB use. The Maryland Poison Center received 61 phone calls about GHB and GHB analogues in 2000. (GHB analogues are believed to be the source of GHB in 71% of persons urine-tested for GHB in Maryland.) Approximately one-half of these calls (32) involved hospital treatment.

Nationwide GHB Use

Nationally, the Drug Abuse Warning Network reports that GHB-related emergency department episodes have increased dramatically, from 56 in 1994 to 4,969 in 2000. Sixty percent of these episodes occurred among emergency department patients age 25 and under. As of November 2000, the Drug Enforcement Administration had documented 71 GHB-related deaths. However, this number probably underestimates the true number of GHB-related deaths, since GHB does not remain in the body long and is usually not tested for at autopsy.

SOURCE: Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), Center for Substance Abuse Research. For more information, contact Erin Artigiani of CESAR at 301-403-8329.

CORRECTED TITLE: Two-Thirds of Maryland 12th Graders Report Using Alcohol in the Past Year, Around One-Third Report Marijuana or Cigarette Use

Alcohol was the substance most frequently used by Maryland high school seniors in the past year, followed by marijuana (38%) and cigarettes (32%), according to the results of the recently released 2001 Maryland Adolescent Survey. Designer drug (including ecstasy), amphetamine, and LSD use averaged 11%, 9%, and 9%, respectively, across the state. A full copy of the report, which includes results for 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students by county, is available online at www.msde.state.md.us under Reports & Data/Special Reports.

Percentage of Maryland 12th Grade Students Reporting Drug Use in the Past Year, by County, 2001

County	Alcohol	Marijuana	Cigarettes	Designer Drugs	Amphetamines	LSD
Allegany	78%	46%	48%	14%	15%	16%
Anne Arundel	75	41	34	13	11	10
Baltimore City	50	26	13	4	5	1
Baltimore	73	45	39	18	13	15
Calvert	74	40	41	17	14	16
Caroline	80	44	46	12	7	15
Carroll	68	40	43	12	12	12
Cecil	75	44	36	20	11	16
Charles	69	37	40	13	13	8
Dorchester	63	35	29	5	8	2
Frederick	68	35	39	14	10	10
Garrett	66	30	34	9	10	12
Harford	75	49	43	14	15	15
Howard	68	33	34	12	10	9
Kent	68	41	37	9	8	12
Montgomery	60	35	26	7	7	6
Prince George's	54	35	23	6	5	3
Queen Anne's	77	41	40	16	12	15
St. Mary's	74	42	42	18	10	16
Somerset	60	35	34	4	5	2
Talbot	76	46	36	19	13	11
Washington	71	39	43	15	14	16
Wicomico	75	48	34	11	11	8
Worcester	72	47	29	11	11	9
Statewide	66%	38%	32%	11%	9%	9%

NOTE: Percentages in bold are those that are greater than the statewide average.

SOURCE: Maryland State Department of Education, 2001 Maryland Adolescent Survey, September 2001. For more information, contact Erin Artigiani of CESAR at 301-403-8329 or erin@cesar.umd.edu.

**St. Mary's County OPUS Report Now Available:
*Youth Offenders Think Marijuana Use Is "No Big Deal,"
Report Uncertainty About Ecstasy Composition***

As part of the Offender Population Urine Screening (OPUS) program, 50 youths processed in the St. Mary's County Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Intake Office were interviewed and tested by urinalysis for illicit drug use between November 2000 and May 2001. Following are report highlights about the three most frequently discussed drugs—marijuana, ecstasy, and cocaine.

- Just over one-fourth (26%) of offenders tested positive for at least one drug, primarily marijuana (20%).
- As in other Maryland counties, **marijuana** was reported to be the most easily obtainable and popular drug. Many youths reported marijuana being sold and used at school. Most youths reported that marijuana use was "no big deal" but considered it a problem because of the numbers and frequency of people using it.
- **Ecstasy** was reported to be available and prevalent in St. Mary's County. While youths could list many names of ecstasy (e.g., Donald Ducks, Fishies, Rainbows, Triple Stacks), most were unsure of the drug's exact chemical composition.
- Powder and crack **cocaine** were frequently mentioned as drugs that were easy to obtain. Crack cocaine was reported to be used by older people, while powder cocaine was reported to be used by youths who either snorted it or mixed it with marijuana.

A full copy of the St. Mary's OPUS report is available on the DEWS website at www.cesar.umd.edu/dews.htm.

NOTE: OPUS was established to monitor drug use among Maryland's juvenile offenders through voluntary and anonymous interviewing and drug testing at Maryland's Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) intake and detention facilities. OPUS began collecting data from juveniles processed by DJJ intake site staff in May 1999. OPUS drug use patterns may not be typical of the general youth population in this county. However, prior research indicates that drug use by juvenile offenders may provide advance warning of epidemics in the general population.

SOURCE: Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), Offender Population Urinalysis Screening program (OPUS), Center for Substance Abuse Research. For more information, contact Erin Artigiani of CESAR at 301-403-8329.

Do You Want to Receive a Parents/Caregivers Publication?

DEWS is considering creating a new publication directed toward parents and caregivers about youth substance abuse and its prevention and treatment. If you would be interested in receiving such a publication, or if you have ideas or suggestions for topics, please contact DEWS by email at DEWS@cesar.umd.edu, fax at 301-403-8342, or phone at 877-234-DEWS.