

## Montgomery County DEWS County Snapshot Released: *More Youths Entering Treatment Likely to Report Marijuana Than Alcohol As a Substance of Abuse*

The recently released *DEWS County Snapshot: Substance Abuse Trends in Montgomery County* provides an overview of current substance abuse trends in the county. The report combines the results of interviews with Drug Scan contacts and juvenile offenders participating in the OPUS study with quantitative county indicators such as treatment admissions. The combination of the very recent DEWS interview results with the more extensive, but typically older, quantitative indicator data provides a rare opportunity to detect emerging drug trends. Following are some of the findings from this report.

- As in other Maryland counties, **alcohol** continues to be the most persistent problem. Nearly three-fourths of all juvenile and 78% of adult clients admitted to treatment in Montgomery County mentioned alcohol as a substance of abuse in fiscal year 2002. One Drug Scan contact reported that “kids find it at home or go to friends’ homes to drink” and that the attitude is that “it’s only alcohol” (p. 3).
- **Marijuana** is the most popular illicit drug among youths in the county. Slightly more than one-fifth of high school seniors reported using marijuana in the past month and 43% reported using it in their lifetime. More Montgomery County juveniles entering treatment mentioned marijuana (95%) as a substance of abuse than alcohol (74%).
- While the number of juvenile treatment admissions citing **hallucinogens** as a substance of abuse decreased from 13% in fiscal year 1998 to 6% in fiscal year 2002, there were limited reports that LSD and mushrooms were available and popular in the county. For example, a Drug Scan contact reported an increase in mushroom use, particularly in the Olney area. One OPUS youth described the practice of placing drops of liquid acid on pieces of Listerine mint gel sheets.
- OPUS youths report that **OxyContin** has become increasingly popular because it is considered a “cleaner form of heroin” (p. 2). One Drug Scan contact reported having seen cases of prescription forging and illegal use of Medicaid cards to obtain the drug.

A copy of the Montgomery County *DEWS County Snapshot*, as well as other *DEWS County Snapshot* reports and county drug data, is available online ([www.dewsonline.org](http://www.dewsonline.org)) or by calling CESAR at 301-403-8329.

SOURCE: Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), *The DEWS County Snapshot: Substance Abuse Trends in Montgomery County 2(5)*, June 2003. For more information, contact Erin Artigiani at [erin@cesar.umd.edu](mailto:erin@cesar.umd.edu).

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