

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Maryland Drug Scan is a statewide, county-level drug use monitoring project that is designed to obtain substance abuse professionals' perceptions of local drug trends. The goal of the Drug Scan is to gather current information on substance use and to provide that information in a timely manner to policymakers, researchers, program administrators, and community activists across the state. The Drug Scan is one component of the Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), an initiative of the Cabinet Council on Criminal and Juvenile Justice in collaboration with the Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR).

Twice a year, CESAR staff interviews approximately 130 people knowledgeable about emerging drug trends in their counties. CESAR staff will combine information from Drug Scan and three other DEWS data collection projects to construct a comprehensive picture of county-level drug use trends. These subsequent analyses will expand upon and validate the findings of the Drug Scan. The following are highlights of the Drug Scan respondents' perceptions of drug trends, by county. Maps illustrating some of these findings and listing the number of respondents in each county appear on page 7.

ALLEGANY COUNTY

- Heroin use has increased slightly.
- The primary drug of abuse is marijuana.
- Interviewees expressed concern over increases in inhalant use among pre-adolescents, and the availability of addiction services for this age group.

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

- Heroin use has increased significantly, especially among young, white, suburban residents.
- In addition to heroin, hallucinogens, ketamine, ecstasy, and inhalants are considered emerging drugs of abuse.
- Primary drugs of abuse are marijuana, powder cocaine, and crack.
- Methamphetamine and red rock opium have recently appeared in the local drug market.

BALTIMORE CITY

- Heroin is a primary drug of abuse, and is considered to be one of the city's largest health problems. There are an estimated 45,000 heroin addicts within the city, and an estimated 33% of the city's injection drug users are HIV positive.
- While injection use is still the most popular route of administration, there has been a marked increase in the number of people smoking and snorting heroin.
- Other primary drugs of abuse within the city are marijuana and crack cocaine.

- Since the early 1980's, the price of cocaine and heroin has dropped dramatically. Caps and vials that once sold for \$30 to \$50 are now being sold for \$2 to \$5.
- Due to the flooded drug market, dealers have developed complex marketing schemes to entice new buyers. Free product samples or "testers" and coupons are a few examples of savvy street marketing.
- A variety of prescription drugs are available in the illicit drug marketplace, including numerous pain medications, Ritalin®, and Viagra®.

BALTIMORE COUNTY

- Heroin use has increased significantly. However, because no open air heroin markets currently exist, it is considered an emerging drug of abuse, not a primary one.
- Speedballing (heroin and cocaine combined) is popular amongst injection heroin users. The practice is often referred to as "a coke and a dope."
- Primary drugs of abuse are marijuana and crack cocaine.
- Red rock opium use is on the increase, especially amongst adolescents. Many marijuana users try the substance because it looks similar to hashish and is smokable.
- Marijuana is rarely smoked in joints, but instead in either bong, bowls (small pipes), or blunts. For this reason, users often call marijuana use "having a B." Hallowed out cigarettes are also sometimes used.

CALVERT COUNTY

- Heroin has become more visible and is considered an emerging drug of abuse.
- Methamphetamine use among teenagers and young adults has increased slightly.
- An increase in prescription drug use was identified among pre-adolescents. Antidepressants, Ritalin®, and dexedrine are illegally obtained from other kids or their parents who were prescribed the medications.
- Illegal use of the prescription pain medication Percocet® is on the rise.
- Marijuana is the county's primary drugs of abuse. Crack cocaine is also problematic.

CAROLINE COUNTY

- Heroin is used by a small percentage of the county's population and is not considered to be an emerging drug of abuse.
- Primary drugs of abuse are marijuana and crack cocaine.
- Marijuana is sometimes combined with cocaine and called "greens."

CARROLL COUNTY

- Heroin use has increased steadily since 1993, and is considered a primary drug of abuse.
- Other primary drugs of abuse are marijuana, cocaine, and crack cocaine.
- Baltimore City is considered the primary source for heroin and cocaine.
- County contacts believe that both heroin and marijuana have increased in purity.

CECIL COUNTY

- Heroin use is on the rise; it is readily available and fairly cheap.
- Primary drugs of abuse, in order of severity, are marijuana, crack cocaine, and powder cocaine.
- While street-corner markets exist for crack cocaine, most heroin users travel to Philadelphia and Delaware to buy the drug.
- Combined usage of heroin and cocaine is on the rise.
- Gaps in treatment services are a serious problem: Cecil County has no detoxification programs, and there are limited residential treatment options.

CHARLES COUNTY

- Heroin is considered an emerging drug of abuse. However, contacts believe that heroin use is less pronounced in the county than in some surrounding areas.
- Methamphetamine, LSD, and inhalants are reported to be on the increase among teenagers.
- Crack is considered the primary drug of abuse for the county.

DORCHESTER COUNTY

- While there are some indications that heroin is present in the county, it is not currently considered an emerging drug problem.
- Primary drugs of abuse within the county are marijuana and crack.
- Sources report that “blunts” or “Philly blunts” often contain cocaine.

FREDERICK COUNTY

- Heroin use is on the rise in Frederick County. New users either snort or smoke the substance, while older users primarily inject it.
- There are no known heroin markets within the county. Most users travel to Baltimore City or Washington, D.C. to get their supply, and they may sell small amounts to local friends and acquaintances.
- Marijuana and crack cocaine are considered the county’s primary drugs of abuse.
- Many out-of-town dealers travel to Frederick County to sell drugs.
- There have been slight increases in the use of methamphetamine and dextromethorphan (DXM) amongst adolescents.

- Burglaries have occurred at a number of local veterinarian offices, in which the dissociative anesthetic ketamine was stolen.

GARRETT COUNTY

- Heroin is considered an emerging drug of abuse.
- Marijuana is considered to be the primary drug of abuse.
- LSD was reported to be making a “comeback” in the county.

HARFORD COUNTY

- Heroin is considered a primary drug of abuse; large increases in use occurred among high school students.
- Other primary drugs of abuse within the county are marijuana, powder cocaine, and crack.
- Emerging drugs of abuse include PCP, LSD, and designer drugs. However, designer drugs are beginning to be replaced by heroin.
- A new fad amongst adolescents is the “clam bake” wherein a number of people pile into a car, roll up the windows, turn on the heat, and smoke marijuana.
- Baltimore City, Philadelphia, York County (Pennsylvania), and New York City are the main sources for heroin and crack.

HOWARD COUNTY

- Primary drugs of abuse in Howard County are marijuana, cocaine (powder and crack), and heroin.
- Baltimore City and Washington, D.C. are the primary sources for heroin and cocaine.
- Within the county, established open-air crack and marijuana markets exist. Heroin is also beginning to emerge in the open-air markets.
- Recently, undercover agents have been approached for ketamine.

KENT COUNTY

- Heroin use is not considered to be a problem at this time. There are small amounts of the drug available, but its use is limited to a small group of long-time users.
- Primary drugs of abuse are marijuana and crack cocaine.
- Most of the marijuana in the county is grown locally, often in cornfields.
- Areas of heavy drug use/sales include Kennedyville, Rock Hall, and Chestertown.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

- Heroin use is increasing slightly, particularly among those aged 15 to 25 years.
- Primary drugs of abuse are marijuana, powder cocaine and crack.
- PCP and LSD use are on the decline.
- Methamphetamine use and ketamine use have emerged in small amounts.
- In Gaithersburg, some gangs make new members inject heroin as a condition of membership and involvement in gang activities.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

- Heroin use is holding steady. However, interviewees are worried that the county may experience the increase that other counties have seen.
- PCP and inhalants were identified as emerging drugs in addition to heroin.
- The primary drugs of abuse are cocaine and marijuana, which are purchased locally or in Washington, D.C.
- It is believed that adolescents use marijuana as often as they use alcohol and tobacco.
- While crack users outnumber powder cocaine users, the disparity is decreasing. Overall, the use of all forms of cocaine is decreasing slightly.

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

- Heroin is not considered a problem within the county at this time.
- Primary drugs of abuse are marijuana and crack.
- Marijuana is predominantly smoked in blunts, which are sometimes flavored with honey or chocolate.
- Raves are no longer highly publicized. Organizers now stay mobile and make the events hard to find.

SAINT MARY'S COUNTY

- Heroin is not believed to be an emerging drug problem in the county.
- LSD use is believed to be on the increase among college students.
- Crack and marijuana are reported to be the county's primary drug problems.

SOMERSET COUNTY

- One contact who works with much of the Eastern shore cites Somerset County as having crack and heroin in "bigger waves" than other counties on the shore.
- Heroin is considered an emerging drug of abuse.

- While the majority of users snort heroin, there has been an increase in injection use.
- The county's primary drug of abuse is crack.

TALBOT COUNTY

- Heroin use has increased, and heroin is believed to be an emerging drug of abuse.
- Percocet® and other prescription medications are also believed to be emerging drugs of abuse within the county.
- Novelty drugs, such as crack with food coloring in it, were mentioned by one source in Talbot County.
- Primary drugs of abuse for Talbot County are marijuana and crack.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

- Heroin is considered an emerging drug of abuse. A heroin market has appeared in Hagerstown within the past year, but it is fairly small.
- Marijuana, powder cocaine and crack are considered the county's primary drugs of abuse.
- Marijuana use, while already widespread, is believed to be on the rise.
- An estimated 70% to 80% of the county's open-air drug markets are run by "out-of-towners" from New York and Florida.

WICOMICO COUNTY

- Heroin use is on the increase, especially among younger users. Most users begin by snorting and then move to injection use.
- Crack, powder cocaine, and marijuana are the primary drugs of abuse within the county.

WORCESTER COUNTY

- Heroin was noted to be used in small amounts, and is considered an emerging drug.
- Other emerging drugs are steroids and ketamine.
- Primary drugs of abuse are marijuana, powder cocaine, and crack.

STATEWIDE SUBSTANCE ABUSE ISSUES AND CONCERNS

At the end of each interview, Drug Scan asked the respondents whether they felt there were any social, economic, or political factors that affected drug use patterns. The responses were often fast and intense. Some respondents reflected a sense of disgust at the current state of affairs, while others offered insights into the changes that have occurred in the public perception of substance abuse or specific county characteristics that are risk factors.

Below are some of the responses to the questions we asked about drug related issues:

Why do people use drugs?

- Decrease in the perceived risk of drug abuse
- Greater acceptance of so-called gateway drugs, such as alcohol and marijuana
- Substance use seen as a rite of passage
- Desire to “live on the edge”
- Increase in interstate traffic
- Physical or emotional abuse
- Lack of parental involvement
- Peer pressure and a desire to “fit in”
- Lack of social activities and role models

Why do people deal drugs?

- Economic downturn
- Unemployment
- Easy money
- For respect

What treatment best meets the needs of substance abusers?

- Increasing the number of people who perceive the danger of using drugs
- Women and adolescents need greater access to treatment
- Adolescents need to be referred to treatment before they get in trouble

What other health concerns are involved in substance abuse?

- HIV
- Hepatitis

What are some county-specific substance abuse related issues?

Baltimore City - The primary concern mentioned by Baltimore City contacts is the negative health effects related to substance abuse, such as HIV, hepatitis, and other STDs.

Cecil - According to one contact, the rural nature of this county leads many people to have a false sense of security. They believe their county cannot have a drug problem. The reality is that surrounding urban areas do exert a strong influence on substance use in nonurban counties.

Dorchester - One contact described the county as economically depressed. This has resulted in a lack of employment opportunities for skilled labor. A new Hyatt hotel is being built to counter this downturn, and it is believed that gambling may be allowed in the hotel. This concerns many who believe the increase in transients and the length of time they stay in the county could also increase the opportunities for drug dealing and substance abuse.

Harford and Frederick - Contacts in Harford and Frederick counties mentioned the rapid economic growth in their counties as a potential problem. The influx in population prompted by the economic surge has created an environment in which adolescents living in larger, newer, more transient communities are often left on their own while their parents work. The lack of community stability has caused a decline in the sense of community disapproval. Several people interviewed commented that drug use is more out in the open than it was in the past, and that juveniles are trying drugs at a younger age.

Talbot - One of this county's contacts thought that the Talbot County Airport could be a problem since individuals are able to take off and land at this airport during the night without authorization. This could potentially enable drug dealers to have an easy and efficient method of bringing drugs into the county.

Washington - The geography of Washington County puts its urban center in close proximity to three states. Hagerstown is less than 30 miles from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, and drug trends in the city are often influenced by what is available and popular in those areas. Franklin County, Pennsylvania, is especially well known as a source for drugs by local users.

Worcester - This county is a resort area. Since the vast number of people are visiting areas like Ocean City, the population fluctuates greatly. The tourist population brings new drugs into the community, and also provides a market for local dealers.