

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

New CEWG Report Released: Cocaine/Crack Abuse Stable at High Levels or Increasing; Methamphetamine Abuse Continues to Be Low in East

For the past 30 years, NIDA's Community Epidemiology Work Group (CEWG) has served as a national drug abuse surveillance system. Comprised of a network of epidemiologists and researchers from 22 geographically dispersed areas of the nation, the CEWG meets twice a year to share qualitative and quantitative information on current and emerging drug abuse patterns and trends. Following are highlights from the recently released report on the proceedings of the 61st meeting, held this past January.

- **Marijuana** continues to be the most widely available and abused drug across CEWG areas, with abuse indicators remaining stable at high levels in 15 CEWG areas and increasing in 5 areas.
- **Cocaine/crack** abuse indicators remained stable at high levels in 16 CEWG areas, stable at low levels in 3 areas, and increased in 3 areas (Honolulu, Maine, and New Mexico).
- **Methamphetamine** abuse indicators remained stable at low levels in 10 CEWG areas in the east and stable at higher levels in 2 areas in the west (Los Angeles and San Francisco). Increases in methamphetamine abuse indicators occurred in 5 areas (New Mexico, Phoenix, San Diego, Seattle, and Texas). There were reports of "changing demographics in methamphetamine-abusing populations in 13 CEWG areas, with reports in some areas of increases of abuse among youth, women, and Hispanics" (p. 43).
- **Heroin** abuse indicators were stable or mixed at high levels in 5 CEWG areas (Baltimore, Boston, Detroit, Los Angeles, and New York City) and at low levels in 10 CEWG areas. While 2 CEWG areas (Chicago and New Mexico) reported increases in abuse indicators, five areas (Atlanta, Denver, Philadelphia, St. Louis, and San Francisco) reported decreases in heroin abuse indicators. For example, "in the first half of 2006, heroin was reported as a primary drug for about 9 percent of Denver treatment admissions (excluding alcohol), down from 22 percent in 2003" (p. 24).
- **Hydrocodone** and **oxycodone** continue to be the most widely abused other opiates in many CEWG areas. For example, in Atlanta, "multiple abuse indicators show that hydrocodone is the most commonly abused narcotic analgesic . . . , followed by oxycodone" (p. 34). Indicators of the abuse of **fentanyl** continued to increase in 5 CEWG areas. Nine CEWG areas reported deaths involving **methadone**. In Maine, "methadone has caused more deaths than any other drug (38 percent of the drug deaths in 2005)" (p. 33).

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Community Epidemiology Work Group, Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse, Proceedings of the Community Epidemiology Work Group: Highlights and Executive Summary*, January 2007. Available online at http://www.drugabuse.gov/PDF/CEWG/Vol1_107.pdf.

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