

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

National Drug Intelligence Center's SENTRY Offers a Drug Early Warning and Response System

What is SENTRY? Launched in February 2009, SENTRY is an internet-based system that collects qualitative and quantitative data from a wide network of drug abuse professionals to identify, evaluate, and track the development of new drug abuse trends. The timely nature of SENTRY allows new drug-related behaviors to be recognized in the early stages and this critical information to be shared in real time.

Who reports to SENTRY? Qualitative and quantitative drug use information is reported to SENTRY by participating correctional officers, drug diversion investigators, emergency medical personnel, forensic chemists, juvenile detention officers, law enforcement officers, medical toxicologists, school nurses, school resource officers, treatment providers, and others. SENTRY participants provide information on new or unusual drug-related activity via an electronic submission form. As of November 9, 2010, SENTRY had more than 1,000 participants from all 50 states, including 20 from Maryland.

What types of drugs does SENTRY focus on? SENTRY'S primary focus is on synthetic drugs, such as LSD, ecstasy, and methamphetamine. However, the system also tracks other drugs, including over-the-counter and prescription medication, botanical substances and extracts, and products which are used in the manufacturing of synthetic drugs. Some past trends identified were the abuse of Salvia in the Midwest, the presence of mephedrone in North Dakota and Oregon, the emergence in New Jersey of a possible heroin/fentanyl combination with the street name of "kill" or "keel", and national law enforcement reports of the increasing use of synthetic cannabinoid products by teens.

How is information disseminated? SENTRY information is presented on an interactive online map that color-codes verified events by drug type and allows users to view individual event details. In addition, when qualitative information obtained from SENTRY participants identifies a pattern of drug-related activity, a *DrugAlert Watch* report is issued. NDIC then continues collecting additional quantitative data on the pattern. If a trend is detected, a *DrugAlert Warning* report, combining both the quantitative and qualitative information, is issued. Both the SENTRY map and *DrugAlerts* can be accessed at <http://www.justice.gov/ndic/sentry>.

NOTE: SENTRY is operated by NDIC in coordination with ONDCP and supports the National Synthetic Drugs Action Plan.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from U.S. Department of Justice, National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC), SENTRY. Available online at <http://www.justice.gov/ndic/sentry/index.htm>.

Want to Report to SENTRY?

Become part of a nationwide network of professionals who report emerging drug abuse trends and be among the first to see these new patterns developing for yourself! Information on how to become a SENTRY participant can be found on SENTRY's website at <http://www.justice.gov/ndic/sentry>.