

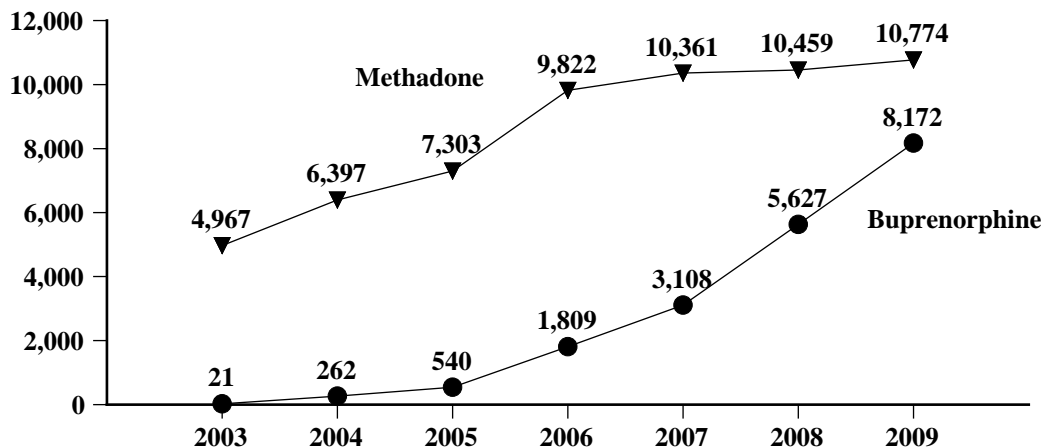
## A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

### *Number of Law Enforcement-Seized Buprenorphine Items Analyzed by U.S. Labs Increases Dramatically*

The estimated number of buprenorphine drug items secured in law enforcement operations and analyzed by state and local forensic laboratories has increased dramatically since 2003, according to data from National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS). NFLIS, a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) program, provides a means to monitor the diversion of legitimately marketed drugs into illicit channels. Since 2003, the number of buprenorphine drug items analyzed has increased from 21 to 8,172. In comparison, the number of methadone drug items seized and analyzed nearly doubled from 2003 to 2006, then only increased 9% from 2006 to 2009. According to the DEA, “While methadone is still more prevalent in terms of reporting in NFLIS, buprenorphine has increased at a sharper rate, indicating a need for continued monitoring. This is especially true considering the level at which buprenorphine is being distributed and prescribed for legal medical purposes” (p. 10) (see *CESAR FAX*, Volume 20, Issue 23 for more information on retail sales of buprenorphine).

**Estimated Number of Total Methadone and Buprenorphine Drug Items  
Analyzed by State and Local Forensic Laboratories in the U.S., 2003-2009**



NOTES: NFLIS includes drug chemistry results from completed analyses only. Drug evidence secured by law enforcement but not analyzed by laboratories is not included in the database. State and local policies related to the enforcement and prosecution of specific drugs may affect drug evidence submissions to laboratories for analysis. Laboratory policies and procedures for handling drug evidence may also vary. For example, some analyze all evidence submitted, while others analyze only selected items.

SOURCES: Adapted by CESAR from U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Office of Diversion Control, *Special Report: Methadone and Buprenorphine, 2003-2008, 2009* (online at [http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/nflis/methadone\\_buprenorphine\\_srpt.pdf](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/nflis/methadone_buprenorphine_srpt.pdf)); and DEA, Office of Diversion Control, *National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) Year 2009 Annual Report, 2010* (online at [http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/nflis/2009annual\\_rpt.pdf](http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/nflis/2009annual_rpt.pdf)).