

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

**University of Maryland, College Park**

***Heroin, Marijuana, and Methamphetamine Indicators Increase Across U.S.***

The Community Epidemiology Work Group (CEWG) is a network of epidemiologists and researchers from across the United States who meet twice a year to review current and emerging substance abuse problems. Information reported at each CEWG meeting is intended to alert substance abuse professionals, policymakers, and the general public to current conditions and potential problems so that appropriate, timely action can be taken. An advance report from the 45th CEWG meeting, held this past December, was recently released by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). Following are some of the findings described in the report:

- While “**crack cocaine**” continues to be readily available at low prices in almost all CEWG cities,” cocaine indicators (including crack) show a steady decrease over time in most areas (p. 11).
- **Heroin** indicators, such as emergency department mentions and arrests, continued to increase in 12 of the 21 CEWG cities, including Boston, Chicago, Miami, and Washington, D.C. Since high-purity heroin (typically between 60 and 70%) continues to be available on the street, “heroin snorting has become much more prevalent and is spreading to younger populations.” For example, “in Washington, D.C., it was reported that heroin abuse has become increasingly popular among the city’s teenagers and young adults, while in Miami more than one-third of the primary heroin admissions were novice non-injecting abusers” (p. 7).
- In most CEWG cities emergency department **marijuana** mentions have increased dramatically, as have treatment admissions and arrests. In New York City, “cannabis arrests continue to mount and may surpass cocaine and heroin arrests by the end of 1998” (p. 13).
- **Methamphetamine** indicators continued to increased in most West and Southwest CEWG cities. In addition, this drug began to appear more frequently in indicators from other cities, such as Boston, where “reports from the DEA, State Police, and treatment providers suggest that methamphetamine has become more available” (p. 18).

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from data from National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), Community Epidemiology Work Group, “Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse: Advance Report,” 1999.

**Want More Information About the CEWG?**

For additional information about the CEWG, as well as State Epidemiology Work Groups (SEWGs), visit the CEWG homepage at [www.cdmgroup.com/CEWG](http://www.cdmgroup.com/CEWG).

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