

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

***Ecstasy Use and Injection of Heroin Are Increasing
According to Recent CEWG Meeting***

The Community Epidemiology Work Group (CEWG) is a network of epidemiologists and researchers that meets twice a year to discuss current and emerging substance abuse problems. Dr. Alan Leshner, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the sponsoring agency, recently noted that since its inception in 1976, "the CEWG has identified every major drug abuse epidemic that occurred in this Nation, including the beginning of the crack epidemic in the early 1980s" (p. 3). Following are highlights from the 48th CEWG meeting held in Baltimore, Maryland this past June.

- **Ecstasy** (MDMA) use appears to be increasing in the 21 CEWG areas. In addition, ecstasy use is expanding beyond raves to other social settings, including schools.
- While indicators of **heroin** use were relatively stable, injection of heroin appears to be rising. "There is a growing concern that injection of heroin also may be increasing among youth as they become more experienced and knowledgeable and look for a more efficient infusion of the drug" (p. 11).
- **Marijuana** indicators, which have increased dramatically over the past decade, stabilized in 17 of the 21 CEWG areas. However, marijuana abuse remains a serious problem.
- Indicators of **methamphetamine** use continued the decline reported since 1998 in CEWG areas. Reasons for the decline include early warning and attention to the problem, increased prevention/education and law enforcement efforts, and decreases in the purity of methamphetamine.
- **Cocaine** indicators continue to decrease or remain stable in the majority of CEWG areas, perhaps because "the negative consequences of crack use generated an awareness of its risks among potential users" (p. 6).

NOTE: The 21 CEWG areas reporting at this meeting were Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Detroit, Honolulu, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Newark, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, Phoenix, St. Louis, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, Texas, and Washington, D.C.

SOURCE: National Institute on Drug Abuse, Community Epidemiology Work Group, "Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse Advance Report," June 2000. For more information about the CEWG, contact Nicholas Kozel at kozeln@nih.gov.

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