

Drug Early Warning System

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Working Together to Identify Emerging Drug Trends in Maryland

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Marijuana Is the Primary Drug Detected Among Youth Offenders in Maryland

The most recent results from the Offender Population Urinalysis Screening (OPUS) Intake Study continue to support reports of marijuana as the primary drug used by Maryland youth offenders. The highest rates of marijuana positives were found among youth tested in Frederick County (28%), Harford County (29%), and Baltimore City (44%). Cocaine and opiates were detected in 4% or less of the juveniles. Youths stated that marijuana is seen by many youths to be “the same as cigarettes” and that it is easier to obtain than alcohol because “you need an ID for alcohol.” The findings from each of the six counties are available on the DEWS website at www.cesar.umd.edu/dews.htm.

Percentage of Youth Offenders Testing Positive for Drugs, by DJJ Intake Site, May 1999 to June 2000

	Montgomery County (N=50)	Baltimore County (N= 146)	Carroll County (N= 71)	Frederick County (N=47)	Harford County (N=51)	Baltimore City (N=48)
Marijuana	18%	19%	17%	28%	29%	44%
Cocaine	0%	2%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Opiates	0%	2%	3%	2%	2%	0%
Amphetamines	4%	4%	8%	0%	6%	0%
Any Drug (of 10)	22%	23%	28%	28%	35%	44%

NOTE: Urine specimens were analyzed for 10 drugs: amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, cocaine, marijuana, methadone, methaqualone, opiates, PCP, and propoxyphene.

SOURCE: Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), Offender Population Urinalysis Screening program (OPUS), Center for Substance Abuse Research. For more information, contact Erin Artigiani of CESAR at 301-403-8329.

OPUS: Intake Study

The Offender Population Urinalysis Screening (OPUS) program was established to monitor drug use among Maryland's juvenile offenders through voluntary and anonymous interviewing and drug testing of youths at Maryland's Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) intake and detention facilities. OPUS began collecting data from juveniles processed by DJJ intake site staff in May 1999.

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