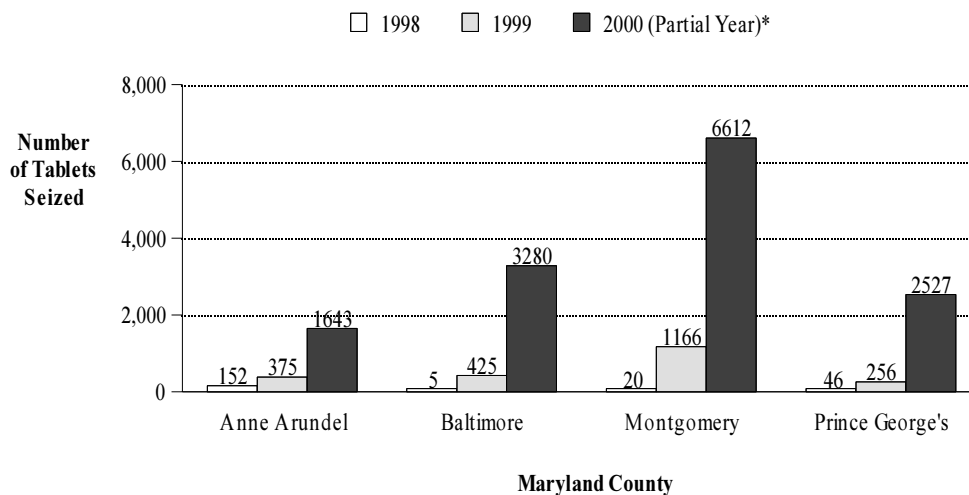


Police Ecstasy Seizures Increase Dramatically In Four Maryland Counties

Ecstasy (MDMA) is a synthetic drug that combines the properties of hallucinogens with those of methamphetamine, a type of speed. DEWS researchers have been tracking ecstasy use in Maryland since it was first reported in mid-1999. Ecstasy has now been reported as an emerging drug in 18 jurisdictions and is spreading from the club or rave scene to the general teen and young adult population. Police seizures of ecstasy also suggest an increased presence in the state. In Baltimore County, the number of ecstasy tablets seized increased from 5 in 1998 to 3,280 in just the first half of this year. Increases in seizures in Montgomery County have been equally dramatic--from 20 tablets seized in 1998 to 6,612 in the first half of 2000. The State is currently preparing a strategic action plan to address the growing concern about ecstasy use in Maryland. In addition, a series of town meetings will be held across the state this fall to educate the public about ecstasy and the actions the State and local agencies have agreed to take.

Number of Ecstasy Tablets Seized by Police in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties



*2000 data for Anne Arundel, Baltimore, and Montgomery counties are for January-June. 2000 data for Prince George's County is for January 1 to September 21.

NOTES: The Maryland State Police (MSP) report that the number of ecstasy cases (as opposed to seizures) increased from 13 in 1998 to 59 in 1999. As of September 6, 2000, there were 76 cases. MSP case data does not include Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Montgomery, or Prince George's counties or Baltimore City because these jurisdictions do not use MSP labs. Baltimore City's crime lab does not track ecstasy cases at this time.

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