
Howard County OPUS Intake Report Now Available:

Reports of Ecstasy and Marijuana Use At School

Between June and August 2000, 50 youths processed in the Howard County Department of Juvenile Justice Intake Office were interviewed and tested by urinalysis for illicit drug use. Following are highlights of the recently released report.

- Ecstasy was the most frequently mentioned drug. It “has become more socially accepted and is used at parties and at school” (p. 7). Several youths mentioned that ecstasy may be cut with other drugs, such as cocaine or heroin.
- Several youths stated that marijuana use in school has increased and that youths frequently come to school high, get high in school, and obtain marijuana in school. Eighteen percent of the youths tested positive for marijuana.
- Cocaine use is more accepted than heroin use. While there does not seem to be a lot of cocaine or heroin use in the county, and many youths report knowing someone who uses one of these drugs. None of the youths interviewed tested positive for cocaine or heroin.
- Several youths expressed the belief that LSD and psychedelic mushrooms are increasing in popularity.
- According to youths interviewed, prescription drugs, such as Ritalin, Adderall, and Percocet, are crushed and snorted or taken intravenously.

A full copy of the Howard County OPUS report is available on the DEWS website at www.cesar.umd.edu/dews.htm.

NOTE: These drug use patterns may not be typical of the general youth population in this county. However, prior research indicates that drug use by juvenile offenders may provide advance warning of epidemics in the general population.

SOURCE: Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), Offender Population Urinalysis Screening program (OPUS), Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR). 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.

The Maryland Drug Early Warning System (DEWS) is an initiative of the Cabinet Council on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Chair, and is supported by a grant from the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention to the Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR), University of Maryland. The DEWS Fax is published monthly. 301-403-8329 • 1-877-234-DEWS (toll-free) • 301-403-8342 (fax) • dews@cesar.umd.edu • www.cesar.umd.edu/dews.htm