

## St. Mary's County DEWS County Snapshot Released: *Alcohol and Marijuana Continue to Be Most Persistent Problems*

The recently released *DEWS County Snapshot: Substance Abuse Trends in St. Mary's County* provides an overview of current substance abuse trends by combining the results of interviews with Drug Scan contacts and juvenile offenders participating in the OPUS study with qualitative county indicators such as treatment admissions. The combination of the very recent DEWS interview results with the more extensive, but typically older, qualitative indicator data provides a rare opportunity to detect emerging drug trends. Following are some of the findings from this report.

- **Alcohol** and **marijuana** continue to be the most persistent problems in the county. The number of people entering treatment programs who mentioned both drugs have increased over the past four years. Over half of high school seniors reported current alcohol use and nearly one-quarter reported current use of marijuana. These findings are consistent with reports from both juvenile offenders and Drug Scan professionals interviewed in the county.
- **Cocaine** is primarily used by adults in the county. For example, in FY 2001 276 adults entering treatment programs mentioned cocaine, an increase of 27% from FY 1998. By contrast, few OPUS juveniles reported that cocaine was available and the youths did not appear to be familiar with the drug.
- Nearly one in ten high school seniors reported using **designer drugs** in the past 30 days and Drug Scan contacts report that typical ecstasy users are in their late teens or early twenties.
- OPUS juveniles in St. Mary's county reported that **prescription drugs** such as Adderall® and Percocet® could be obtained from friends who were prescribed the drugs at a cost of \$1 to \$5 per pill.

A copy of the St. Mary's County *DEWS County Snapshot*, as well as other *DEWS County Snapshot* reports and county drug data, is available online ([www.dewsonline.org](http://www.dewsonline.org)) or by calling CESAR at 301-403-8329.

SOURCE: Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), *The DEWS County Snapshot: Substance Abuse Trends in St. Mary's County* 2(1), March 2003. For more information, contact Erin Artigiani at [erin@cesar.umd.edu](mailto:erin@cesar.umd.edu).