

# **D**rug **E**arly **W**arning **S**ystem

*Working Together to Identify Emerging Drug Trends in Maryland*

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## **Juvenile Offender Population Urinalysis Screening Program (OPUS)**

**Detention Study**

**January-May 2000**

**Report prepared  
August 2000 -Revised**

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Juvenile OPUS is a component of the DEWS Program. Juvenile OPUS and other findings are disseminated in DEWS faxes. The DEWS Fax is published monthly. To receive DEWS Faxes, please contact CESAR: 301-403-8329, 1-877-234-DEWS (toll-free), 301-403-8342 (fax), [dews@cesar.umd.edu](mailto:dews@cesar.umd.edu), [www.cesar.umd.edu/dews.htm](http://www.cesar.umd.edu/dews.htm).

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*Supported by the Cabinet Council on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Chair, and the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention.*

## **ABSTRACT**

Approximately 800 youths processed in one of five Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) detention facilities provided a urine specimen. Almost half (43%) of the youths tested positive for at least one drug, primarily marijuana (42%). One percent of the youths tested positive for cocaine, opiates, or amphetamines. These results are similar to those reported in the prior February-May 1999 OPUS Detention Study.

OPUS is designed to provide insight into emerging drug trends among the juvenile offender population. It should be noted that OPUS drug use patterns may not be typical of the general youth population. However, prior research has indicated that offender urinalysis results provide advance warning of drug epidemics in the general population.

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## **Juvenile Offender Population Urinalysis Screening (OPUS)**

### **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

Juvenile OPUS is one component of Maryland's Drug Early Warning System (DEWS), an initiative of the Cabinet Council on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, Lt. Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Chair. DEWS is supported by a grant from the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention.

The Juvenile OPUS Study was implemented by the Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR) in June 1998 as a urinalysis monitoring program for juveniles processed by the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The project goals are to monitor changes in drug use and to identify emerging drugs of abuse among the juvenile offender population.

The Juvenile OPUS Project takes place in two venues: Detention and Intake. Twice a year the Detention Study obtains urine specimens only from youths newly admitted to DJJ's five detention facilities. The Intake Study obtains interviews and urine specimens from youths being assessed in DJJ county offices.

This report presents results from the Detention Study conducted between January and May 2000. A final table compares the urine test results collected between February-May 1999 and January-May 2000 in the five DJJ detention facilities.

<p>OPUS is designed to provide insight into emerging drug trends among the juvenile offender population. It should be noted that OPUS drug use patterns may not be typical of the general youth population. However, prior research has indicated that offender urinalysis results provide advance warning of drug epidemics in the general population.</p>
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## **METHOD**

- Nurses obtained voluntary and anonymous urine specimens from youths detained in Maryland's five DJJ detention facilities (Carter, Cheltenham, Hickey, Noyes, and Waxter).
- Only youths who had been admitted to the facility during the last 72 hours and who were not being transferred from another secure facility were included.
- After obtaining informed consent, the nurses obtained a voluntary and anonymous urine specimen. The specimen was sent to a laboratory and analyzed for 10 drugs: amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, cocaine, marijuana, methadone, methaqualone, opiates, phencyclidine (PCP), and propoxyphene.
- A candy bar was offered to respondents as an incentive for participation.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Response Rates and Characteristics of Tested Juveniles**

- 88% of the 916 youths approached provided a urine specimen (See Table 1).
- The majority of the tested juveniles were male (79%) and black (69%) (See Table 2).
- 79% of the tested youths were 15 or older; 29% were 17 or older (See Table 2).
- 32% of the tested youths were charged with violent offenses, 31% were charged with property offenses, and 25% were charged with drug-related offenses (See Table 2).
- Nearly 80% of the tested youths resided in a metropolitan area: Baltimore City (37%), the DC metro area (21%), or the area surrounding Baltimore (20%) (See Table 2).

**Table 1**  
**Response Rates, by Detention Facility**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Number of youths approached</b>	<b>Percentage of youths who provided specimen</b>
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Carter</b>	(92)	94
<b>Cheltenham</b>	(511)	83
<b>Hickey</b>	(66)	82
<b>Noyes</b>	(102)	93
<b>Waxter</b>	(145)	97
<b>Total</b>	(916)	88%

Source: Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR), University of Maryland, College Park,  
Juvenile OPUS Detention Study Report, January-May 2000 - Revised.

**Table 2**  
**Demographic Characteristics of Tested Respondents**  
**(N=802)\***

Characteristic	%
<u>Gender</u>	
Male	79%
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	
Black	69%
White	28%
Hispanic	2%
Other	1%
<u>Age</u>	
13 or younger	9%
14	12%
15	24%
16	26%
17 or older	29%
	} 79%
<u>Offense**</u>	
Violent	32%
Property	31%
Drug-related	25%
Other	12%
<u>Region of Residence***</u>	
Baltimore City	37%
D.C. Metro Area	21%
Baltimore Surrounding Area	20%
Eastern Shore	11%
Southern Maryland	4%
Western Maryland	3%
D.C. and out of state	4%

\*Race data were missing for 5 juveniles tested. Charge data were missing for 7 juveniles tested.

\*\*Property offenses include arson, breaking and entering, burglary, destruction of property, larceny/theft, stolen property, stolen vehicle, and trespassing. Violent offenses include assault, attempted murder, carjacking, homicide, manslaughter, robbery, sexual assault/rape, sex offense, and weapons. Drug-related crimes include drug, tobacco, and alcohol possession and sale, and DUI/DWI. Other offenses include unauthorized use of vehicles, truancy, and public peace.

\*\*\*Baltimore Surrounding Area includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties. D.C. Metro area includes Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties. Eastern Shore includes Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. Western Maryland includes Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties. Southern Maryland includes Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties.

Source: Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR), University of Maryland, College Park, Juvenile OPUS Detention Study Report, January-May 2000 - Revised.



## **FINDINGS**

### **Urine Test Results**

- 43% of the youths (46% of males, 34% of females) tested positive for at least one drug (See Table 3).
- 45% of males and 31% of females tested positive for marijuana (See Table 3).
- Cocaine, opiates, and amphetamines were detected in 1% of all juveniles (See Table 3).
- Eight of the nine juveniles who tested positive for opiates were white; six were male and five were charged with a drug-related crime. All nine were 16 or older. Eight of the nine were from Baltimore City or its surrounding area; one was from the Eastern Shore (Somerset County). Five of the 9 juveniles who tested positive for opiates were positive for more than one drug.
- Youths from Southern Maryland were more likely to test positive for amphetamines (6%) than youths from any other region in the state. Of the two youths who tested positive for amphetamines in Southern Maryland, one was a 14-year-old white female charged with assault, the other was a 14-year-old white male charged with stolen vehicle (See Table 4).
- The percentage of youths who tested positive for a drug increased with age. By age 17, more than half of the youths tested positive for a drug (See Figure 1).

**Table 3**  
**Urine Test Results, by Gender**

	<b>Males (N=635)</b>		<b>Females (N=167)</b>		<b>Total (N=802)</b>	
	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Positive For:</u>						
Marijuana	283	45	51	31	334	42
Cocaine	9	1	2	1	11	1
Opiates	6	1	3	2	9	1
Amphetamines	4	1	3	2	7	1
Any Drug (of 10)	290	46%	57	34%	347	43%

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

Source: Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR), University of Maryland, College Park, Juvenile OPUS Detention Study Report, January-May 2000 - Revised.

**Table 4**  
**OPUS Urine Test Results, by Region of Residence\***  
**(N=767\*\* juvenile detainees)**

	Baltimore City (N=293)	Baltimore Surrounding Area (N=157)	D.C. Metro (N=169)	Eastern Shore (N=87)	Western Maryland (N=27)	Southern Maryland (N=34)	Total (N=767) **
<u>Positive for:</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Marijuana	48	48	38	40	15	15	42
Cocaine	2	3	1	1	0	0	1
Opiates	1	3	0	1	0	0	1
Amphetamines	<1	1	1	1	0	6	1
Any Drug (of 10)	50%	50%	39%	41%	15%	21%	44%

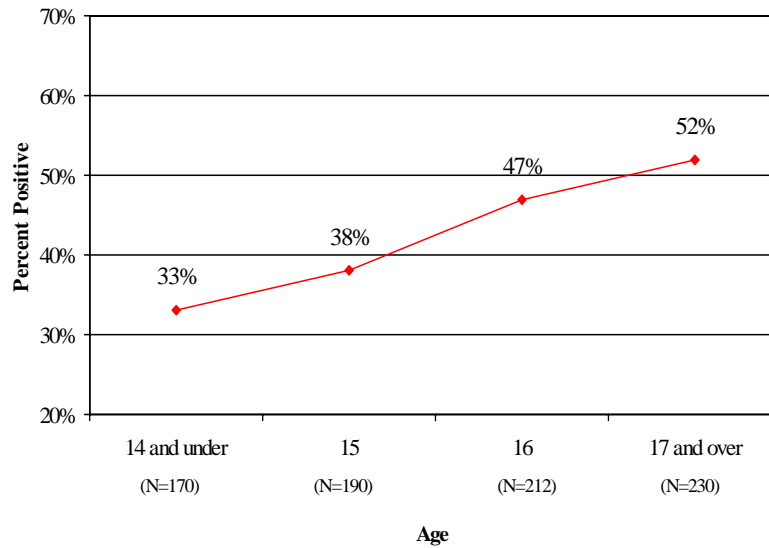
Note: Urine specimens were analyzed for 10 drugs: amphetamines, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, cocaine, marijuana, methadone, methaqualone, opiates, PCP, and propoxyphene.

\*Baltimore Surrounding Area includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties. D.C. Metro area includes Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties. Eastern Shore includes Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. Western Maryland includes Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties. Southern Maryland includes Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties.

\*\*Data for 33 juvenile detainees were omitted because they lived outside of Maryland, and residence data were missing for another two.

Source: Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR), University of Maryland, College Park, Juvenile OPUS Detention Study Report, January-May 2000 - Revised.

**Figure 1**  
**Percent Positive for Any Drug, by Age**



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

Source: Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR), University of Maryland, College Park, Juvenile OPUS Detention Study Report, January-May 2000 - Revised.

**OPUS DETENTION STUDY COMPARISONS  
FEBRUARY-MAY 1999 AND JANUARY-MAY 2000**

This section presents comparisons of the urinalysis results across two data collection periods of the Detention Study. Prior OPUS reports may be accessed at [www.cesar.umd.edu](http://www.cesar.umd.edu), or by contacting CESAR directly (301-403-8329).

- Results from the two data collection periods showed little differences (See Table 5).
- In both studies, youths were most likely to test positive for marijuana (See Table 5).

**Table 5**  
**Urine Test Results Over Two Data Collection Periods**

	<b>February-May 1999</b> (N=545)	<b>January-May 2000</b> (N=802)
<u>Positive For:</u>		
Marijuana	39%	42%
Cocaine	2%	1%
Opiates	2%	1%
Amphetamines	1%	1%
Any Drug (of 10)	42%	43%

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

Source: Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR), University of Maryland, College Park, Juvenile OPUS Detention Study Report, January-May 2000 - Revised.