

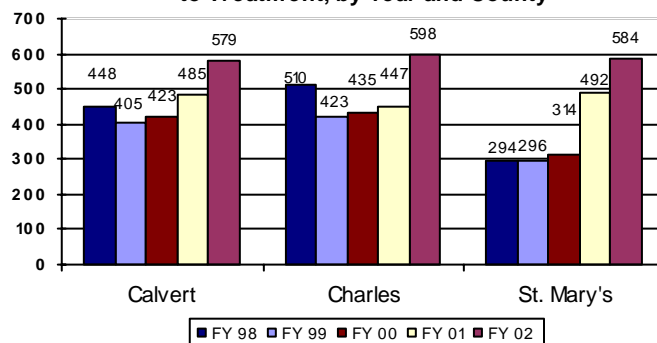
THE DEWS COUNTY SNAPSHOT

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TRENDS IN CALVERT COUNTY

DRUG USE IN CALVERT COUNTY: OVERVIEW

- ⇒ Nearly 60 percent of Calvert 12th graders drank alcohol in the past month, and seven out of ten youths entering drug treatment in the county mentioned alcohol as a substance of abuse.
- ⇒ Marijuana remains the substance most frequently cited as a problem by youths entering treatment. DEWS contacts suggest that marijuana is often laced with drugs like heroin, LSD, PCP, and cocaine.
- ⇒ Ecstasy is described as easily accessible, but Drug Scan contacts disagree about the level of use.
- ⇒ OPUS youthful offenders described two new drug combinations: ecstasy mixed with mushrooms and mushrooms in chocolate bars.
- ⇒ Approximately one-quarter of high school seniors reported using LSD at least once.
- ⇒ OxyContin and other prescription drugs have become increasingly popular among juvenile offenders. Pills are reportedly obtained through friends, "doctor shopping," or even by printing prescriptions with a computer.

Total Marijuana/Hashish Mentions at Admission to Treatment, by Year and County



Source: Adapted by CESAR from SAMIS data.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The *DEWS County Snapshot* is our attempt to make available the latest evidence on county drug trends. Every six to eight weeks, Drug Early Warning System (DEWS) staff will publish a Snapshot of a different Maryland county. Snapshots for Baltimore, Prince George's, and Montgomery counties are planned for the months ahead. The *Snapshot* is intended to alert readers to current trends in their county.

(continued on page 3)

KEY TERMS

OPUS (Offender Population Urinalysis Screening)—Staff conduct interviews with juvenile offenders at county intake centers.

Drug Scan—Staff conduct interviews with professionals in education, criminal justice, prevention, and public health.

MAS (Maryland Adolescent Survey)—A bi-annual survey of drug use by 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th graders.

"Current use" is the use of a drug at least once in the past 30 days.

Drug Mentions—The Substance Abuse Management Information System (SAMIS) is maintained by the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration to monitor treatment admissions. Up to three drugs of abuse are noted.

NOTEWORTHY FINDINGS: ECSTASY, PCP, HALLUCINOGENS AND OXYCODONE

Current use of designer drugs and LSD by high school seniors in Calvert County is higher than use reported state-wide. According to the Maryland Adolescent Survey (MAS), approximately 10 percent of Calvert County high school seniors

reported current use of designer drugs (e.g., MDMA, ecstasy) in 2001, compared to nearly 5 percent of all Maryland seniors. More than twice as many high school seniors reported current use in 2001 (10 percent) than in 1998 (nearly 5 percent). In fact,

in 2001 designer drugs were the fourth most widely used substance among Calvert high school seniors, after alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana, respectively. Among 6th, 8th, and 10th graders, current use of designer drugs ranged from less than 1

OPUS Youths Talk About Drugs

"All I know is that [ecstasy] eats your brain. The drug overwhelms your brain." (15-year-old)

"LSD is always a topic of conversation." (17-year-old)

"People use heroin whenever they can get it." (16-year-old)

"It all has to do with your home life and your parents knowing who you go out with. And also, with the amount of drugs available in your area, and the policing." (17-year-old)

"People use drugs because there's nothing else to do, because they're bored . . . because they become mellow and get along with others, and this leads to happy feelings." (17-year-old)

percent to 7 percent.

In contrast, Calvert County youth interviewed by OPUS staff had little to say about ecstasy. Several indicated that ecstasy was obtainable in the county and that it was sometimes used with alcohol. Drug Scan contacts indicated that ecstasy was used primarily by teens and young adults, but disagreed about the level of use. Although the local police have seized ecstasy in controlled buys, some contacts indicated that use might be leveling off. One contact believed that media campaigns have helped curb interest.

Approximately one-quarter of high school seniors in the county reported having tried LSD at least once. Nearly 9 percent of Calvert's high school seniors reported current use of LSD in 2001, compared to the state average of slightly less than 4 percent, and the national average of just over 2 percent. Current use of LSD ranged from none

(for 6th graders) to 6 percent (for 10th graders).

Overall, OPUS youths appeared to believe that LSD was difficult to find in the county. Nevertheless, some youths appeared knowledgeable about its use. According to these juveniles, LSD can be obtained in liquid or pill form or on sheets of paper that are cut into smaller pieces known as "hits" or "stamps." A 16-year-old youth stated that 'shrooms mixed with ecstasy was a "new" drug. The youth reported that psychedelic mushrooms were ingested by "eating a pill, snorting it—or it comes in chocolate bars."

Although combined adult and juvenile PCP mentions on admission to treatment decreased 25 percent between fiscal years 1998 and 2002, PCP mentions increased from 30 to 41 between fiscal years 2000 and 2001. In fact, adult PCP mentions increased steadily from 2000 to 2002. Juvenile mentions, by comparison, changed only slightly during this time.

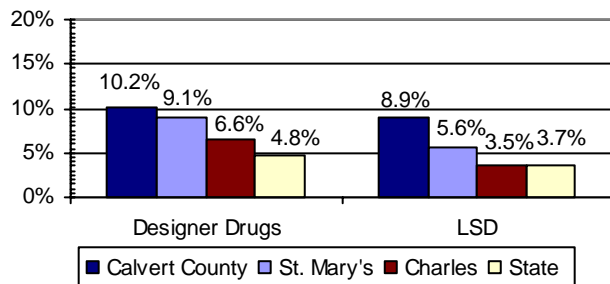
Drug Scan contacts reported that the county had made a number of seizures of PCP over the past year, mostly through routine traffic stops. The drug was available in small, clear glass vials of approximately a quarter ounce or less. Users reportedly were mostly Caucasian. Typically, they sprinkled PCP on parsley, dipped marijuana cigarettes in it, mixed it with cocaine, or used it with alcohol. Although none of the OPUS urine tests were posi-

tive for PCP, a 16-year-old OPUS youth maintained that PCP was available in pill form. Another youth stressed that it was "fairly readily available...[and] seems to be coming back in favor." One youth described PCP users in the county as "older teenagers," while a Drug Scan contact reported that users were typically ages 30 to 40. Slang terms for PCP reported by OPUS youths included "green" and "dippers" (cigarettes dipped in PCP).

A marked increase in the use of OxyContin (oxycodone) and other opiates was described by Drug Scan contacts. One called oxycodone "the Valium of the new millennium," because an increasing number of clients reported that it was easy to obtain. Other contacts agreed that the wide range of individuals using this drug stole it or obtained it using forged prescriptions or prescriptions from doctors who were "conned."

A Drug Scan contact stated that OxyContin use by kids had increased during the last 12 months. The contact said that there had been "lots" of dealing in the schools, but that some users got started through a legitimate prescription resulting from injury. The same contact stated that heroin addicts were using OxyContin because it was safer to use than heroin. Opiate use was "becoming more and more prevalent, especially the oxycodone products," the contact said.

Percentage of 12th Graders Reporting Current Use of Designer Drugs and LSD in 2001 by Jurisdiction



Calvert, N = 226; St. Mary's, N = 243; Charles, N = 291; State, N = 6,078

Source: Adapted by CESAR from the 2001 Maryland Adolescent Survey. The MAS Report does not provide the standard errors around these observations; therefore, caution should be exercised in interpreting any differences between county estimates.

CONTINUING CHALLENGES: ALCOHOL & MARIJUANA

Overall, alcohol abuse in Calvert County has remained high, with 85 percent of all treatment admissions mentioning alcohol as a substance of abuse in FY 2002. The number of alcohol mentions remained fairly stable between fiscal years 1998 and 2001, but increased notably between fiscal years 2001 and 2002 (from 861 to 1,045).

OPUS youths frequently reported that alcohol was easily obtained and popular among Calvert's juvenile populations. One teenager stated that juveniles could obtain alcohol from older peers. Hard liquor, specifically rum and vodka, and beer were mentioned as being favored by youths, but "any and all types [of alcohol] are popular." Several respondents stated that while drinking alcohol, juvenile users might also smoke marijuana. When asked why, a youth replied, "For the good feeling." There was consensus that alcohol use begins in the teenage years, and that users vary in race and ethnicity.

MAS findings revealed that in 2001 alcohol was the most widely used substance among 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th graders in Calvert County. MAS data indicated that 59 percent of 12th graders admitted alcohol use within the past 30 days, and 41 percent admitted past-month binge drinking. Current alcohol use for 6th, 8th, and 10th graders ranged from about 9 percent to 47 percent; binge drinking ranged from 3 to 30 percent.

Marijuana remained the substance most frequently cited by juveniles entering treatment (86 percent) in fiscal year 2002. OPUS youths mentioned it in almost every interview and indicated that experimentation could begin as young as age 10. MAS data revealed that approximately a quarter of all county 10th and 12th graders reported current marijuana use in 2001.

Two OPUS youths reported that teens use various code terms in an effort to conceal their drug discussions. For example, one teen said that her friends refer to marijuana as "spinach." A 13-year-old said that kids use numbers or different types of candy when referring to different types of marijuana. Juveniles reported that marijuana is laced with a variety of drugs, including heroin, LSD, PCP (boat), cocaine (both crack—woo bob—and powder) and natural herbs (e.g., basil or oregano).

A Drug Scan contact believed that marijuana was "the number one illegal drug problem" in the county, concluding that "people think it is not much different than drinking." Another described it as a "multicultural drug."

Youth offenders reported using code words, such as the names of various types of candy, or even the word "spinach," to conceal their drug discussions.

Message From the Director (continued)...

More extensive supporting documentation for each issue can be found on the DEWS website (www.dewsonline.org).

It is important to recognize the limitations of the *Snapshot*. It is neither an exhaustive overview of a county's drug trends nor a review of possible interventions or solutions. Rather, its unique strength is that it provides readers with a current picture of a county's drug trends gathered from reviewing recent DEWS interviews with youthful arrestees (OPUS) and knowledgeable professionals (Drug Scan), in conjunction with more traditional indicators of drug use.

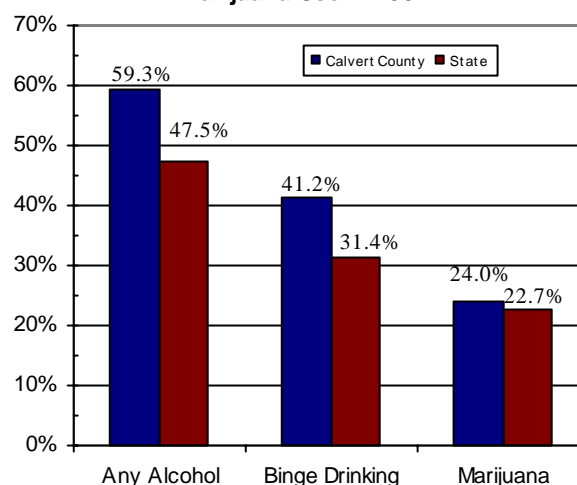
The combination of the recent DEWS interview results with the more extensive quantitative, but typically older, indicator data provides a rare opportunity to detect emerging drug trends. Our goal is to alert readers to changes in drug use that, if substantiated, can form the basis for developing effective interventions and public policies.

You, our readers, play an important role in this new process. After reviewing the *Snapshot*, please determine if you have additional information regarding the trends presented. Let us know if you agree with our assessments or think we have missed an important topic. E-mail us at dews@cesar.umd.edu, or call the DEWS tip line (877-234-DEWS) with your comments. With your help, we can ensure that Maryland has the most current information available with which to monitor county drug trends and inform policy.

Eric D. Wish, Ph.D.

CESAR Director

Percentage of Calvert County 12th Graders Reporting Current Drinking, Binge Drinking or Marijuana Use in 2001



Calvert, N = 226; State, N = 6078

Source: Adapted by CESAR from the 2001 Maryland Adolescent Survey. The MAS Report does not provide the standard errors around these observations; therefore, caution should be exercised in interpreting any differences between a county and the state average.

TREATMENT & PREVENTION SOURCES

Calvert County:

Calvert Substance Abuse Services
(Multiple locations in Calvert County)
Adults call 410-535-3079
Teens call 410-535-5400 x377

Calvert County Treatment Facility
P.O. Box 730
Prince Frederick, MD 20678
Phone: 301-855-9641

Family Coordination Center
410-414-9112

Crisis Intervention Center
24-hour help lines: 410-535-1121
301-855-1075

Crisis hotline: 800-818-3002
Adolescent hotline: 410-257-2216

Maryland:

AIDS Hotline 800-638-6252

Alcohol & Drug Abuse Administration
410-402-8600, www.maryland-adaa.org

Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline
800-422-0009

Drug Early Warning System (DEWS)
877-234-DEWS, www.dewsonline.org
For additional information about the data
presented in this report, please visit the
Calvert Snapshot on the web.

National:

Justice Statistics Clearinghouse
800-732-3277


National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug
Information (NCADI) 301-468-2600 or
800-729-6686, www.health.org

Office of National Drug Control Policy
(ONDCP) Drugs & Crime Clearinghouse
800-666-3332
www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov

National Criminal Justice Reference Service
(NCJRS) 800-851-3420, www.ncjrs.org

Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR)
301-403-8329, www.cesar.umd.edu

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