

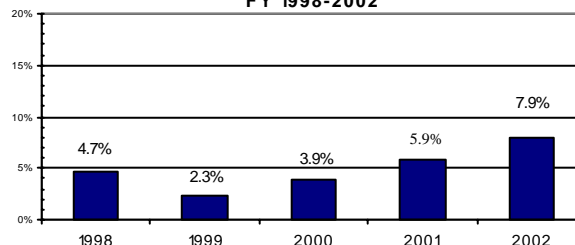
THE DEWS COUNTY SNAPSHOT

SUBSTANCE ABUSE TRENDS IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

DRUG USE IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

- ⇒ PCP abuse is at a 5-year high among adults and juveniles admitted to treatment in Prince George's County. Drug Scan contacts report that the use and availability of PCP has increased.
- ⇒ More than 93 percent of Prince George's youths entering treatment in FY 2002 mentioned marijuana as a substance of abuse, compared to 82 percent statewide.
- ⇒ In 2001, more than one-third (37%) of county 12th graders reported current use of alcohol, and close to one-fifth (19%) reported current binge drinking.
- ⇒ Cocaine/crack was the second most frequently mentioned substance of abuse among adults entering treatment in fiscal year 2002. More than 43 percent of adults cited cocaine/crack, while less than 4 percent of juveniles cited it.
- ⇒ Drug Scan contacts describe crack as "very available." Users often crush it and sprinkle it on marijuana.
- ⇒ Less than 13 percent of adults admitted to treatment in fiscal year 2002—the lowest percentage in 5 years—cited heroin as a substance of abuse.

Percentage of PCP Mentions Among Prince George's County Total Treatment Admissions Over Time
FY 1998-2002



Adapted by CESAR from SAMIS data.

NOTEWORTHY FINDINGS ABOUT PCP, HEROIN, ECSTASY AND AMPHETAMINES

County residents admitted to treatment in fiscal year 2002 mentioned PCP abuse at higher levels than any of the previous five years. Roughly equivalent percentages of Prince George's youths (9%) and adults (8%) cited PCP abuse at treatment

admission. PCP mentions among county adults admitted to treatment increased 78 percent between fiscal years 1998 and 2002 (from 163 to 290), and were nearly 7 times the statewide level. County juvenile mentions increased 22 percent, from 18 to 22, during

the same time period.

Drug Scan contacts in treatment, law enforcement, and education were consistent in reporting that PCP use and availability has increased. Treatment contacts reported that some clients reported using PCP as often

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The *DEWS County Snapshot* is our attempt to make available the latest evidence on county drug trends. Prince George's County is the seventh county *Snapshot* to be released by the Drug Early Warning System (DEWS). The *Snapshot* is intended to alert readers to current trends in one county. More extensive supporting documentation for each issue can be found on www.dewsonline.org

Eric D. Wish, Ph.D., Director

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.

OPUS Youths Tell Us What They Know About Marijuana

"Purple haze, blueberry and orange tulip [types of marijuana] give you a wooziness, and you have to drink milk to get rid of it. Fire turns you sleepy, drowsy, and turns your eyes red. Skunk is the most potent. It burns your throat and stays in your system for 24 hours." (16-year-old)

"Dro is more high than regular [marijuana], blueberry is more high than dro, and chronic just makes you go to sleep." (17-year-old)

"The good kind [of marijuana] is the kind with the red tips . . . fire." (14-year-old)

"[Marijuana is used] in gum wrappers—not the foil part. [Or] open a blunt and put (marijuana) in and smoke it." (14-year-old)

as 3-4 times per week.

Law enforcement authorities contacted by Drug Scan staff described an increase in PCP seizures in the county. Reportedly, at least a dozen PCP seizures have occurred in recent months, while there had been none for several years previously. According to law enforcement contacts, both males and females in their 30s to 50s use PCP. (According to a January 2003 *Washington Post* report about the rise of PCP popularity in the District, Prince George's County police "received more than 115 PCP samples in 2002—up from eight in 2000.")

OPUS youths reported that PCP came in several forms, although they were only able to identify the liquid form of the substance. One youth stated, "It's like water (in a vial), and you take a cigarette and dip it in [the vial] and then suck it up in [a cigarette] and then smoke it." Other youths concurred with this description, adding that when the cigarette is dipped in

PCP, it is called a "dipper." According to an OPUS youth, police refer to a "dipper" as a "Sherman." Another youth maintained that PCP could be smoked "in a bong, like marijuana." Another reported that PCP "makes you do stupid stuff" and that use often begins around age 14. In spite of their seeming familiarity with the substance, however, OPUS youths' urine tests (n=14) were all negative for PCP.

Nearly 6 percent of Prince George's 12th graders reported using PCP at least once in their lifetime in 2001, and nearly 3 percent in the past 30 days. Reports of both current and lifetime use were 5 percent or lower for 6th, 8th, and 10th graders. Current PCP use among 8th graders (3.5%) was higher than among 12th graders.

The lowest percentage of adults (13%) in 5 years mentioned abuse of heroin on admission to treatment in 2002, and less than 1 percent of juveniles mentioned heroin abuse. Slightly more than 3 percent of adults and 1 percent of juveniles mentioned other opiates on admission to treatment.

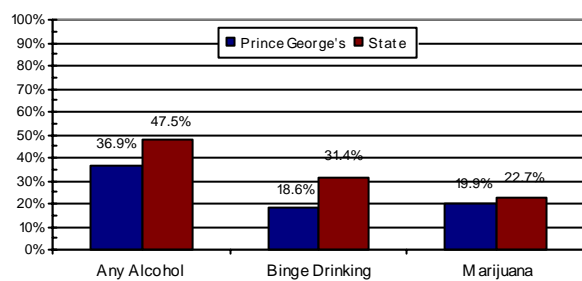
Drug Scan contacts also reported that there seemed to be less heroin use than in prior years, although it was still reportedly "very available." Users were likely to be Caucasian or African American adults. One contact stated that heroin was more potent than it used to be and that most new users snorted ini-

tially, but eventually switched to injecting.

MAS data for 2001 revealed that approximately 2 percent of 12th graders had tried heroin at least once in their lifetime, while less than 2 percent reported current heroin use. Approximately 3 percent of 12th graders reported current use of narcotics (Codeine, morphine, methadone, Percodan), while less than 4 percent reported having tried narcotics at least once. OPUS urine tests results from 14 youths were all negative for opiates, suggesting that opiate use was not widespread among youthful offenders.

Youths reported that ecstasy is snorted or swallowed and that experimentation with the drug begins around age 15 or 16. One youth stated, "Plenty of people use ecstasy." Approximately 8 percent of county 12th graders reported lifetime use of designer drugs (MDMA/ecstasy), and more than 7 percent reported lifetime use of amphetamines. More than 2 percent of 12th graders reported current use of designer drugs, and slightly more than 1 percent reported current amphetamine use. Lifetime use of designer drugs ranged from 1 percent of 6th graders to more than 4 percent of 10th graders, and lifetime use of amphetamines among 6th, 8th, and 10th graders ranged from 2 to 5 percent. Current use of both substances was less than 4 percent for these grades.

Percentage of Prince George's County 12th-Grade Students Reporting Current Alcohol Use, Binge Drinking and Marijuana Use, 2001



Prince George's, N = 294; 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 estimates.

CONTINUING CHALLENGES: ALCOHOL AND MARIJUANA

In fiscal year 2002, nearly three-quarters of adults and two-thirds of juveniles admitted to treatment mentioned alcohol as a substance of abuse. Among juveniles, this represented a 37 percent decrease since 1998 (from 246 to 154), and a 16 percent decrease since 2001 (from 184 to 154).

Most OPUS youths who were interviewed in Prince George's County reported that alcohol is popular and available. A Drug Scan contact reported that obtaining alcohol is "real easy" for kids. Teens use fake IDs or get older siblings or some other adult to buy alcohol for them. Some reported that use begins as young as ages 11 or 12. Youths reported that vodka (coconut vodka and orange vodka), rum, a vodka/cognac mix, brandy, beer, and "40s" (40-ounce bottles of malt liquor) are popular. Several youths reported that a bottle of liquor might be consumed in one night. One juvenile stated that "you can mix [liquor and beer] together and it gets you more drunk."

MAS data for 2001 revealed that more than one-third (37%) of county 12th graders reported current use of alcohol, and nearly one-fifth (18.6%) reported current binge drinking. These reports contrasted with 12th-grade statewide levels averaging 48 percent for current alcohol consumption and more than 31 percent for current binge drinking. Among Prince George's County 6th, 8th and 10th

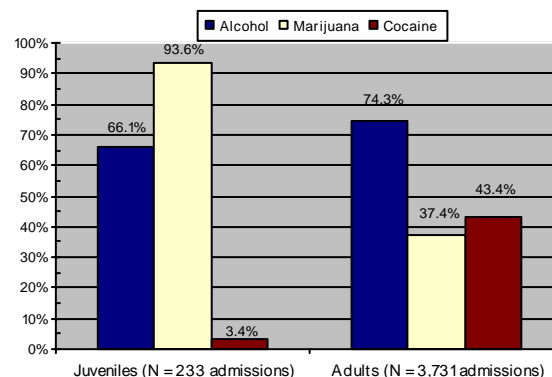
graders, current alcohol use ranged from 7 percent of 6th graders to 24 percent of 10th graders. Current binge drinking levels for the same grades ranged from 3 percent of 6th graders to 10 percent of 10th graders.

Data for fiscal year 2002 showed that nearly all (94%) Prince George's juveniles mentioned marijuana on admission to treatment, compared to 82 percent statewide. Among adults admitted to treatment, more than 37 percent cited marijuana as a substance of abuse, compared to less than 29 percent statewide.

OPUS juveniles reported that marijuana is the most popular, accessible, and available drug among youths in the county. Interviewed youths said that experimentation with marijuana begins around age 12 and depends upon friends' opinions about specific substances, peer pressure, or neighborhood influences.

OPUS youths described several kinds of marijuana, including purple haze, hash, dro (also called hydro), blueberry bud, fire, orange tulip, bush, skunk, chronic, California, Jamaican, kind bud, and "regular." Juveniles' assessments about the strengths of different kinds of marijuana varied. One youth stated, "Bush is weak, is regular. Fire is the strongest. Water is the next strongest." Another youth stated, "Purple haze, blueberry, and orange tulip give you a wooziness, and you have

Percentage of Alcohol, Marijuana and Cocaine Mentions Among Treatment Admissions, By Age Group, FY 2002



Source: Adapted by CESAR from SAMIS data.

Note: Treatment clients are screened at intake to determine their major substances of abuse. Since each admission may have up to three drug mentions associated with it, percentages will not add up to 100%.

to drink milk to get rid of it. Fire turns you sleepy, drowsy, and turns your eyes red. Skunk is the most crucial [most potent]; it burns your throat and stays in your system for 24 hours."

OPUS juveniles reported that marijuana is often rolled into blunts (Dutch Master blunts, EZ wraps), backwoods (with thinner paper than blunts), and rolling papers (e.g., Tops). One youth stated, "Someone will buy a bag and will 'pinch' an amount out and sell it to someone else."

MAS data for 2001 revealed that slightly less than one in five (19.9%) of Prince George's 12th graders reported current use of marijuana, while twice that percentage (40%) reported having tried the substance at least once in their lifetime. Among 6th, 8th, and 10th graders, current marijuana use ranged from 1 percent of 6th graders to 16 percent of 10th graders, while lifetime

use of the substance ranged from 3 percent of 6th graders to 28 percent of 10th graders. Among the 14 OPUS juveniles who participated in urine testing, 3 (slightly more than 21%) tested positive for marijuana.

Drug Scan contacts reported that marijuana users' ages ranged from the teens to the 50s. A juvenile justice contact indicated that nearly a third of the population uses marijuana experimentally and that almost as many youths are chronic, daily users. This contact stated that kids think of marijuana as a "leisure drug," used to "chill out" and relax. A Drug Scan contact indicated that students obtained marijuana in school, at bus stops, in their apartment buildings and neighborhoods, or at parties. "They smoke marijuana as often as they smoke cigarettes."

TREATMENT & PREVENTION SOURCES

An OPUS Youth Describes Crystal Meth

Crystal meth was described by one juvenile as “small little crystals that come in a bag.” When asked to describe the effects of the substance, the youth stated, “People act crazy and don’t know what they’re doing.”

Drug Early Warning System (DEWS)

877-234-DEWS

www.dewsonline.org

For additional information about the data presented in this report, please visit the Prince George’s County Snapshot on the web.

Prince George’s County:

Prince George’s County Health
Department
Division of Addictions & Mental Health
1701 McCormick Drive
Largo, MD 20774
301-883-7853

Second Genesis
5109 Baltimore Avenue
Hyattsville, MD 20781
Adult outpatient recovery program
301-563-6527

Second Genesis
Mellwood House for Women and Their
Children
301-568-4822
www.secondgenesis.org

Maryland:

AIDS Hotline: 800-638-6252

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

Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline
800-422-0009

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 Ser-
vice (NCJRS)
800-851-3420
www.ncjrs.org

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