

National Drug Control Strategy:  
**NATIONAL PRIORITIES**

## BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- **Education—Student Drug Testing: up \$23 million.** The budget proposes \$25 million for student drug testing programs. This initiative will provide competitive grants to support schools in the design and implementation of school-based drug testing, assessment, referral, and intervention programs.
  - During fiscal year 2003, several schools sought funding for the design and support of their own student drug testing programs. The President's Budget expands this program in fiscal year 2005.
- **ONDCP—National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign: \$145 million.** The President's fiscal year 2005 Budget continues funding for ONDCP's media campaign, an integrated effort that combines paid and donated advertising with public communications outreach. Anti-drug messages conveyed in advertising are supported by Web sites, clearinghouses, media events, outreach to the entertainment industry, and strategic partnerships that enable messages to resonate in ways that generate awareness and ultimately change teen beliefs and intentions toward drug use. In 2005, the media campaign will expand its strategy to include information for teens and parents to promote early intervention against drug use.
- **ONDCP—Drug-Free Communities Program: up \$10.4 million.** Building on the success of this program, these additional resources will fund approximately 100 new local community anti-drug coalitions working to prevent substance abuse among young people. This program provides matching grant monies, with priority given to coalitions serving economically disadvantaged areas.
  - The President's Budget recommends increasing funding to \$80 million in fiscal year 2005, with up to 5 percent of available grant funds provided to selected "mentor coalitions" that will help develop new community anti-drug coalitions in areas that do not currently have them.

# Stopping Use Before It Starts: Education and Community Action

In a scene that has become a staple of television dramas, the neighborhood “pusher” frequents local playgrounds offering free drugs to entice first-time users. Such people exist, but they are not the norm. Successful drug dealers are more circumspect; their livelihood depends on it. They are not known for giving out samples.

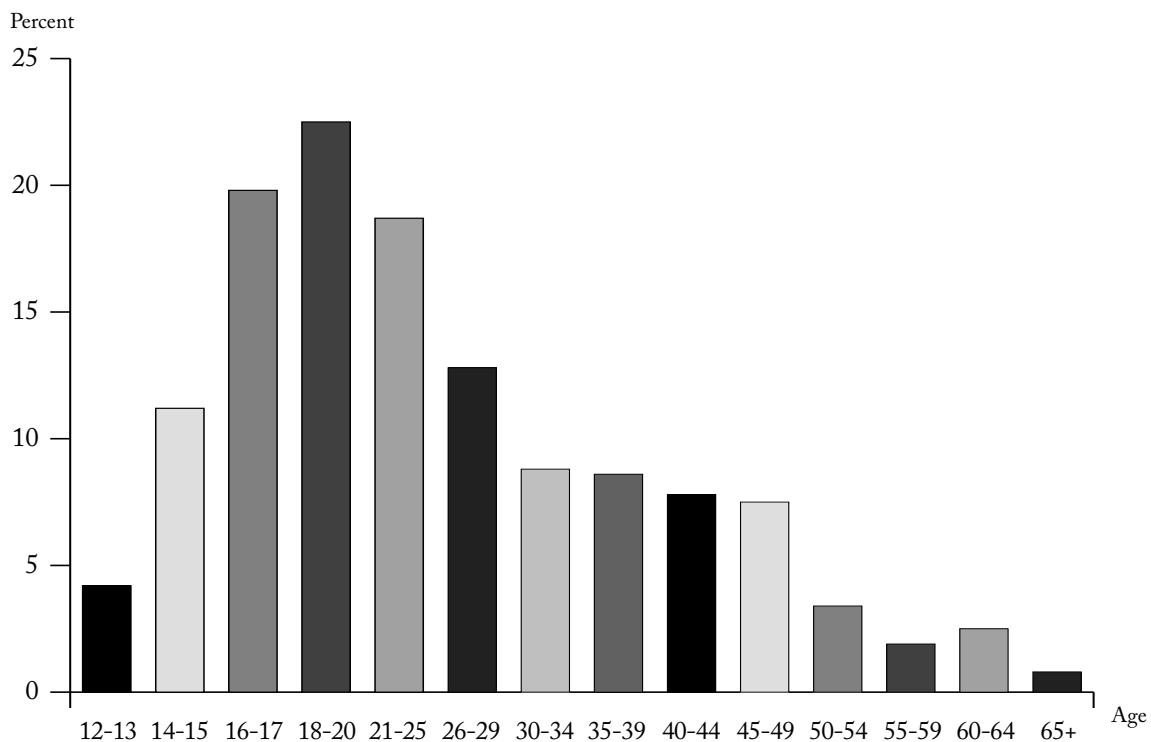
The pressure young people face to use drugs is more accurately portrayed as a general

compulsion to fit in, the type of pressure teens face every day. Debunking the mistaken view that “everyone” is using drugs is a key goal of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, which has contributed to the remarkable decline in drug use over the past two years.

But far too many young people find that their first experience with illegal drugs happens through contact with one person—not a pusher,

**Figure 5: Drug Use Starts With Young People**

Past-Month Illicit Drug Use by Age



Source: National Survey of Drug Use and Health, 2002

not even a peer group, but a single friend. This pressure to use drugs can take on a surprisingly earnest form. A young person exposed to the pleasures of a new drug—or seeking to normalize his own drug-using behavior—may pressure peers to join in the fun or face eventual expulsion from the group.

Youth in the early teen years may face few challenges greater than choosing between a friend and drug use. From the public health perspective that informs this Strategy, this type of friend is a vector of contagion. And all too often, the illegal drug use he proposes to his peers will lead to the pediatric onset disease of addiction.

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## INTERVENING EARLY: MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S JUVENILE ASSESSMENT CENTER

Juvenile arrestees pose an unusual challenge to state criminal justice systems, requiring segregated facilities and a host of specialized services, including drug treatment. Florida's Miami-Dade County takes a different approach, one that works well with the brief intervention approach discussed in more detail in the next chapter. In Miami-Dade, all juvenile arrestees are sent to a central facility, the Juvenile Assessment Center (JAC), which brings together specialists from law enforcement and social services to provide coordinated services to youth as they enter the juvenile justice system.

"We brought all the agencies that deal with arrested children to the JAC," says Wansley Walters, the center's director. "We have staff to do everything from arrest processing to treatment referrals. We have staff from the Dade County school system here to check school records and notify the school that a child has been arrested. The State Attorney's

office is represented so that they can meet with the arresting officer and interview the young person." In all, the formerly bureaucratic process of arresting a juvenile has been shortened from four weeks to less than a day.

All arrestees receive an assessment of some type. "At the root of many of these kids' behavior is a drug problem," says Walters. "Unfortunately, a lot of kids move through the system without having their drug use connected to their behavior problems."

Through careful screening, the JAC staff are able to tailor their interventions accordingly. "One child may need a lengthy residential treatment," says Walters. "You may have a child who needs no more than counseling and a realistic discussion about the risks of what he's doing. Frankly, some children just need some attention—and that may be all [it takes] to modify their behavior."

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Research into youth motivations for using drugs confirms the crucial importance of peers, particularly close friends, in fostering a climate tolerant of drug use. Just as young people who use drugs are much more likely to continue their drug use into adulthood, the available research is unequivocal that people who make it through their teenage years without using drugs are much less likely to start using later in life.

Keeping teens from taking that first, risky step is central to the success of our Strategy. Yet despite parents' best efforts to keep their kids drug-free, every day approximately 4,800 American youth under age 18 try marijuana for the first time—a number roughly equal to the enrollment of six average-size high schools.

Following up with brief interventions for young people who do try illegal drugs (or alcohol) is critical. This Strategy highlights the importance of student drug testing, a prevention approach that accomplishes both goals: deterring drug use while guiding users to needed treatment or counseling.

Student drug testing is a remarkable grassroots tool that the Federal Government is moving aggressively to support with research funding as well as support for program design and implementation. The fiscal year 2005 budget requests \$25 million for student drug testing programs. Eight demonstration grants have already been awarded with prior-year funding, to expand existing programs and evaluate the effectiveness of others.

Student drug testing programs advance the Strategy's goal of intervening early in the young person's drug career, using research-based prevention approaches to guide users into counseling or drug treatment, and deterring others from starting in the first place. The purpose of random testing is not to catch, punish, or expose students who use drugs but to prevent drug dependence and to help drug-dependent students become drug-free in a confidential manner. Effective testing programs include clear-cut consequences for students who use illegal drugs, such as suspension from an athletic activity, until the student has completed counseling.

**Figure 6: Drug Use Initiation Is Highest Among Young People**

Initiation Among Those Under 18 in 2001

|                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| <b>Marijuana</b>      | 1,741,000 |
| <b>Cocaine</b>        | 353,000   |
| <b>Hallucinogens</b>  | 757,000   |
| <b>Ecstasy</b>        | 590,000   |
| <b>Pain relievers</b> | 1,124,000 |

Student drug testing programs work. According to a study published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, a school in Oregon that tested student athletes for drugs had a rate of use that was one-quarter that of a comparable school with no drug testing policy. After two years of a drug testing program, Hunterdon Central Regional High School in New Jersey saw significant reductions in 20 of 28 drug use categories, with cocaine use by seniors dropping from 13 to 4 percent (see box). A study from Ball State University showed that 73 percent of high school principals reported a reduction in

drug use among students subject to drug testing policies, with just 2 percent reporting an increase.

Our Nation needs more of the sort of community and parental involvement that embraced Hunterdon's school drug testing program and made it a success. Americans serve their communities in countless ways—in our most drug-ridden communities, groups of citizens are stepping forward to serve their neighbors, banding together to fight back against the drug trade and the social consequences left in its wake. They are doing it with techniques

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## STUDENT DRUG TESTING AT HUNTERDON CENTRAL REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Lisa Brady, principal of Hunterdon Central Regional High School, remembers 1997 as if it were yesterday.

The Flemington, New Jersey, school's periodic surveys had detected a spike in drug use among the student body, prompting the school board to launch a random testing program for student athletes. "Our school board president at the time was an Olympic track athlete," says Brady. "He was extremely familiar with the benefits of drug testing."

The psychology behind student drug testing programs is straightforward. They give kids an "out," Brady says. "Kids will tell you that the program gives them a reason to say no. They're just kids, after all; they need a crutch. Being able to say, 'I'm a cheerleader,'

'I'm in the band,' 'I'm a football player,' and 'My school drug tests'—it really gives them some tools to be able to say no."

When a student turns up a positive drug test (Hunterdon administers about 200 random tests per year), the student and parents meet privately with a counselor. An intervention is agreed to—typically, brief counseling sessions followed by classes emphasizing decision-making skills. "After that they have to submit a drug screen," says Brady. "Then they return to their activity, safer and smarter as a result of their counseling. The program is designed to be confidential. No records are kept."

A lawsuit filed by the ACLU on behalf of three students eventually forced the suspension of testing, but by this time the

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as varied as videotaping dealers in open-air drug markets, working with zoning officials to condemn crack houses and close down drug paraphernalia stores, and forging alliances between treatment and law enforcement. And they are succeeding, often surprising even themselves (see box on pages 16 and 17). When these Americans get involved in their communities, our whole Nation benefits.

The drug Strategy works best when Americans work together. As discussed more fully in the next chapter, this means making the unpleasant and

seemingly thankless decision to intervene with a family member or friend who is using drugs. Last month, the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign launched an early intervention initiative to help parents recognize the signs of early use and encourage them to take action before use creates problems and leads to addiction, offering information and suggested approaches for discussing the subject with their children.

This campaign also targets peers of teens who have just started to use drugs and alcohol,

program had been enlarged to include students involved in other extracurricular activities. More important, testing had been going on long enough for the school to measure the program's effects. What they found was remarkable: significant reductions in drug use—school wide. And although only certain categories of students were tested, the program had been affecting the student body as a whole, identifying drug use early and buffering the peer pressure that encourages teens to use drugs.

Brady was understandably frustrated at having to put the program on hold. "Here I'm holding data in my hands that shows that this program clearly was effective in reducing drug use among my students," says Brady, "but I was not able to implement the program. I was pretty upset."

She continues, "We have never seen a prevention curriculum that affected the

numbers this substantially. It seemed that finally we had a tool that was making a large difference. And yet we're hemming and hawing about whether to use it."

The school eventually prevailed, but not before litigating all the way to the New Jersey Supreme Court. Today, the program is back in full operation.

Although the program is overwhelmingly supported by Hunterdon parents, Brady is surprised how often the parent, not the student, questions the test results.

"The kid will come in and say, 'I was at a party this weekend, and my drug screen is going to be dirty,' says Brady. "Then the parent tries to get the kid out of the situation. Sometimes the parent is just used to bailing the kids out of everything. A lot of parents are in denial, and sometimes," she adds, "it takes a drug test to make kids and parents overcome that denial."

which is illegal in all 50 states for people under age 21, and includes television, radio, and print ads as well as workplace outreach and other efforts. The campaign takes direct aim at parents' understandable but misplaced fear that they will push their children away by talking to them about drug use.

Children also learn by example. Athletics play an important role in our society, but, unfortunately, some in professional sports are

not setting much of an example. The use of performance-enhancing drugs such as steroids in baseball, football, and other sports is dangerous, and it sends the wrong message—that there are shortcuts to accomplishment, and that performance is more important than character.

America's team owners, union representatives, coaches, and players must work together to end the use of performance-enhancing drugs. Use by even a small number of elite

## FIGHTING BACK IN OREGON

Nobody told Shirley Morgan she couldn't do it.

In the beautiful rural area east of Portland, in the shadow of Mount Hood, drug dealers were taking advantage of the area's abundance of seasonally occupied vacation homes to cook methamphetamine, some of which they sold locally. Marijuana "grows" abounded.

Then, somebody broke into Morgan's house. "It wasn't until my home was burglarized that I asked myself how I had missed all the signs that the drug trade was here," says Morgan, founder of the Mount Hood Coalition Against Drug Crime. "All of a sudden we had cars speeding along what had been quiet mountain roads. We had people cooking meth in their house, dumping the chemicals into the yard, and contaminating the water supply."

Morgan, a marketing and advertising consultant, gathered business, civic, and faith leaders, and her neighbors. Together, they reached the bold conclusion that with some help from law enforcement, they could drive off the drug dealers and meth cooks in their midst. "At any given time," says Morgan "we have one police officer patrolling a 35-mile-long strip. The police just can't be everywhere. So we, the residents of the Mount Hood corridor, formed a volunteer coalition against drug crime in our community."

Members of the coalition collect intelligence such as digital photos of suspicious vehicles and license plate numbers and pass it to law enforcement, often using email. Their Web site, [www.hadit.org](http://www.hadit.org) (the residents had "had it"), lists outstanding arrest warrants and photographs of criminals known to be active in the area. The coalition also



athletes sets a dangerous example for the millions of young Americans, encouraging young people to take dangerous risks with their health and safety. Ending the use of steroids will require sports leagues and athletes to implement stringent drug policies to set a healthier and more positive example for America's young people. These policies will also protect the integrity of their sports and ensure the health and well-being of athletes.

educates property owners about the long-term effects of drug manufacturing in their rental properties (a single meth cook can turn a split-level ranch house with a view into a hazardous materials site).

The coalition works. In a lesson that has been learned time and again by community groups and Orange Hat citizen patrols in some of America's most crime-ridden inner cities, dealers respond to unwanted attention by taking their business elsewhere. Morgan counts six people who were involved with the drug trade who picked up and moved. Another five had their homes repossessed, and several others just went back to their day jobs.

"People ask me, 'Aren't you afraid of retaliation?' I say, 'They're already retaliating, burglarizing our homes, and abusing the environment.'"

Some of her neighbors have sought drug treatment, and Morgan, with the help of a local church ministry, is happy to help place

them, with a strong dose of community involvement. "One of the guys in the program, who used meth, marijuana, and alcohol said, 'I can't do this anymore. Every time I turn around, somebody's looking.'"

Morgan, who is active in the Foursquare Church, works with more than 50 neighbors from all types of backgrounds, but she is happy to explain her pluck and dedication in the context of her Christian faith. "It's sort of a calling—you don't want to go somewhere but you go anyway," says Morgan. "It's like the Samaritan story. You find drugs on your street, and you ask yourself, 'Can I look the other way?' I was challenged by my faith to do something."

In addition to radically changing the climate in the Mount Hood region, Morgan is poised to take her lessons on the road: the coalition recently received a mentoring grant to train and improve the effectiveness of other coalitions in the Pacific Northwest.