
CONCLUSION

Cities, towns, and neighborhoods across the Nation are plagued by a variety of problems: homelessness, crime, domestic violence, teenage pregnancy, child abuse, and sexually transmitted diseases, to name just a few. In many cases, substance abuse is at the root of the problem or a contributing factor. Much is being done to address these issues, and the results are encouraging. Drug use among America's youth has declined substantially in the past three years. Even so, much remains to be done.

There is a growing realization that the best strategy for fighting drug use is a comprehensive, balanced effort among partners in many segments of the community. In other words, for maximum effect the threat must be confronted from every possible angle.

It is not an either/or proposition. If we were to put all our resources into reducing the *demand* for drugs, the drug market would respond by aggressively recruiting new users with low-cost, high-purity drugs. If, on the other hand, we were to put all of our resources into reducing the drug *supply*, the result would be high-cost, low-purity drugs and an upsurge in crime associated with efforts to obtain them. Either scenario would be unacceptable.

The Major Cities Initiative, as described in this booklet, accounts for these realities. It also recognizes that our anti-drug efforts will not succeed if we simply continue to apply the same old methods in the same old ways. We must change our mindset, revise our tactics, try something different.

We can begin by adopting this holistic new approach that looks across boundaries to engage every sector of the community in assessing and addressing the drug threat. Success in this endeavor will spark more collaboration, which, in turn, will lead to greater success in reducing drug use in the United States.