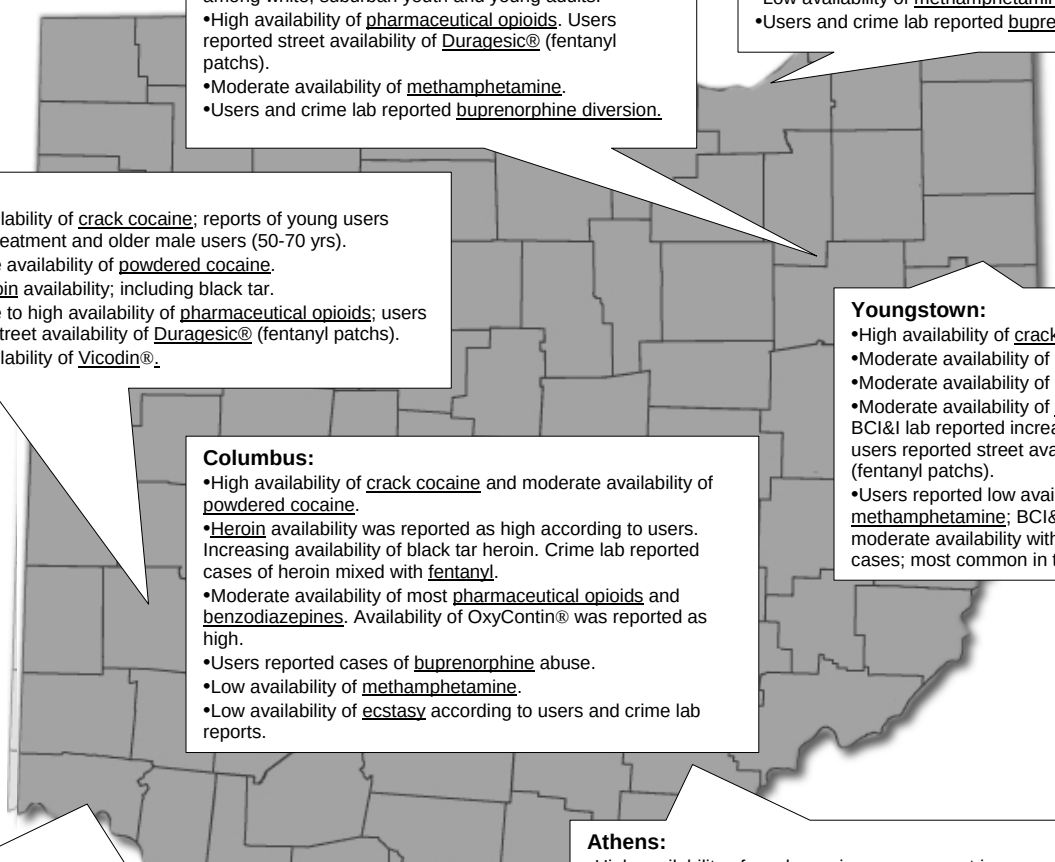
OSAM-O-GRAM

DATE: June 2006
DATELINE: Ohio

Wright State University
The University of Akron

Highlights of Statewide Drug Use Trends

January 2006 – June 2006



Cleveland:
- High availability and purity of crack cocaine.
- Low availability of powdered cocaine.
- Moderate availability of heroin; users reported increasing availability of black tar heroin, including the Hispanic community.
- Moderate availability of pharmaceutical opioids; increased reports of OxyContin® abuse.
- Low availability of methamphetamine.
- Users and crime lab reported buprenorphine diversion.

Akron:
- High availability of crack cocaine; users reported crack injection as increasing.
- Moderate powdered cocaine availability; increasing abuse among middle-aged suburban females.
- Moderate to high heroin availability; continued abuse among white, suburban youth and young adults.
- High availability of pharmaceutical opioids. Users reported street availability of Duragesic® (fentanyl patchs).
- Moderate availability of methamphetamine.
- Users and crime lab reported buprenorphine diversion.

Dayton:
- High availability of crack cocaine; reports of young users entering treatment and older male users (50-70 yrs).
- Moderate availability of powdered cocaine.
- High heroin availability; including black tar.
- Moderate to high availability of pharmaceutical opioids; users reported street availability of Duragesic® (fentanyl patchs).
- High availability of Vicodin®.

Youngstown:
- High availability of crack cocaine.
- Moderate availability of powdered cocaine.
- Moderate availability of heroin.
- Moderate availability of pharmaceutical opioids; BCI&I lab reported increases in MS Contin®; users reported street availability of Duragesic® (fentanyl patchs).
- Users reported low availability of methamphetamine; BCI&I lab reports indicated moderate availability with a decreased number of cases; most common in the tablet form.

Columbus:
- High availability of crack cocaine and moderate availability of powdered cocaine.
- Heroin availability was reported as high according to users. Increasing availability of black tar heroin. Crime lab reported cases of heroin mixed with fentanyl.
- Moderate availability of most pharmaceutical opioids and benzodiazepines. Availability of OxyContin® was reported as high.
- Users reported cases of buprenorphine abuse.
- Low availability of methamphetamine.
- Low availability of ecstasy according to users and crime lab reports.

Athens:
- High availability of crack cocaine; users report increase in young users aged 13-15.
- High availability of powdered cocaine.
- Users report increasing availability of heroin; crime lab confirmed availability as moderate and increasing.
- High availability of most commonly abused pharmaceutical opioids; users report increasing street availability of methadone tablets.
- Ecstasy availability was reported by users and crime labs as high.

Cincinnati:
- High availability of crack cocaine; increasing reports of white users.
- Moderate availability of powdered cocaine; increasing reports of injection.
- Moderate availability of heroin; continued reports of black tar.
- Moderate availability of pharmaceutical opioids with OxyContin® being among the most commonly abused. Law enforcement reported street availability of Duragesic® (fentanyl patchs).
- User reports about buprenorphine abuse.
- Moderate availability of methamphetamine.
- High availability of ecstasy according to crime lab reports.

The Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring Network (OSAM)
June 2006 Meeting

Executive Summary

Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services

This Executive Summary reports highlights of the OSAM Network meeting held in Akron, Ohio, June 15th and 16th, 2006. The report is based on substance abuse trend data collected and analyzed by Regional Epidemiologists in Athens and surrounding counties (rural southeast), Akron-Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton and Youngstown. Regional Epidemiologists interviewed active and recovering drug users, substance abuse treatment providers, and law enforcement personnel, and collected available statistical data to compile their regional drug trend reports.

CRACK COCAINE

- **Availability of crack cocaine continues to be high. User populations continue to diversify within the state.**

Drug users and crime lab professionals continued to report high availability of crack cocaine in all reporting areas of the state. According to drug users, crack prices have remained steady over the last three reporting periods averaging $40-$50 per gram or $100-$150 per 1/8 ounce. The majority of crack users are reportedly middle-aged individuals of lower socioeconomic status. Drug users in Columbus, Cincinnati and Dayton reported an increase in older men (aged 50-70) who get introduced to crack cocaine through their relationships with crack-using women. Participants in Dayton, Youngstown, and Athens reported crack-cocaine users as young as 12-15 years of age. Several areas indicated increasing youth involvement in crack dealing. Intravenous injection of crack continues to be reported at low levels.

POWDERED COCAINE

- **Most areas of the state continued to report moderate to high availability of powdered cocaine. Injection of powdered cocaine was prevalent in most areas of the state, particularly among heroin injectors.**

According to drug users, treatment providers and law enforcement professionals, powdered cocaine continues to be readily available throughout the state. Drug users reported prices of powdered cocaine to be as low as $40-$60 per gram. Higher prices were reported in Akron and Cleveland areas, where $80-$125 per gram was reported. Drug users and crime lab professionals reported purity as moderate to high and unchanged since the last reporting period. Drug users and treatment providers noted that injection of powdered cocaine was increasing, primarily among heroin injectors. Powdered cocaine abuse remains common among very diverse populations of users, including high school-age youth.

HEROIN

- **Availability of heroin continues to be high in most areas of the state. Pharmaceutical opioid abuse remains a common pathway to heroin use.**

Users reported heroin availability throughout the state as high and increasing with Athens reporting the drug as “somewhat available.” Although brown powder remained the most common form of the

drug, black tar heroin was reportedly available in most areas. The Columbus crime lab reported heroin mixed with fentanyl. Heroin prices were consistent with the last reporting period. Participants from Cincinnati, Columbus, and Toledo reported average prices of $160-$170 per gram for brown powder heroin. This same type of heroin was selling on average for $120 per gram in Dayton, Athens, and Cleveland. Young, white adults (ages 18-25) continued to be reported as the most prevalent group of new heroin users. African-American men associated with drug dealing were noted as new users in the Dayton area. These users reportedly prefer intranasal inhalation of the drug. Increased heroin use and distribution among Hispanics was reported in Youngstown and Cleveland.

PHARMACEUTICAL OPIOIDS

- **OxyContin® is reported as the pharmaceutical opioid of choice throughout the state, but availability has decreased. Users and treatment providers in Akron, Cincinnati, Cleveland and Dayton reported cases of Duragesic® (fentanyl patch) diversion and abuse.**

Drug users reported hydrocodone as the most commonly abused pharmaceutical opioid, and user reports of moderate availability were confirmed by crime lab professionals across the state. Other common choices for pharmaceutical opioid abuse include Percodan® (oxycodone hydrochloride & aspirin), and Percocet® (oxycodone hydrochloride and acetaminophen). According to users, treatment providers, and law enforcement professionals, OxyContin® (oxycodone controlled-release) remained one of the most sought after pharmaceutical opioids. However, availability, according to both users and crime labs professionals, is on the decline. Intranasal inhalation or swallowing remain the preferred methods of administration. Generic forms OxyContin® were viewed as inferior for snorting or injection. OxyContin® prices continue to be reported as $0.50 -$1 per milligram. Users and treatment providers in all areas reported that initial opioid abuse is often associated with prior legitimate medical prescriptions. Users report continued access to the drugs through manipulation of the health care system, including online orders. Availability of diverted methadone tablets were reported in Athens, Dayton, Columbus and Cincinnati. Users in Columbus and Cincinnati reported abuse of Suboxone® (buprenorphine and naloxone). Suburban middle-aged whites, high school, and college age youth continue to be reported as the most prevalent groups of pharmaceutical opioid abusers.

METHAMPHETAMINE

- **Users and law enforcement reported methamphetamine availability as being stable or declining in most areas of the state. Use continues to be limited to small networks of users, typically white individuals of middle to lower socioeconomic status and gay men.**

Geographic variation in methamphetamine availability was reported. Akron and Columbus drug users reported availability as low and decreasing, and these reports were confirmed by crime lab professionals. Other areas of the state reported moderate availability of the drug. Methamphetamine prices were reportedly ranging between $80 and $120 per gram. Powder continues to be the most prevalent form reported by users and crime lab professionals, except in Columbus, where “glass”-type methamphetamine is reportedly more available. Smoking and intranasal inhalation were reported as the most common modes of administration. User groups continue to be described as white individuals of lower and middle class background in both urban and rural environments, and gay men in larger urban areas of the state.

PHARMACEUTICAL TRANQUILIZERS

- **Benzodiazepine abuse remains common among diverse user groups.**

  According to drug users and crime lab professionals, street availability of benzodiazepines, such as Xanax® (alprazolam), Klonopin® (clonazepam), and Valium® (diazepam) were reported as moderate in most areas of the state. Klonopin® abuse is reportedly increasing in Cincinnati according to users and treatment providers. Drug users reported that benzodiazepines continue to be abused in combination with other substances, particularly alcohol, stimulants, and heroin.

OTHER DRUGS

- **MDMA/ecstasy availability and abuse varied across the state.** Availability of ecstasy in Athens, Toledo and Cincinnati was reported as high while Akron and Cleveland reported moderate levels of MDMA availability. MDMA continues to sell for $10-$25 per single dose (tablet).

- **LSD and psilocybin** (mushrooms) availability and abuse were described as low across the state.

- Users in Cincinnati reported an increase in street availability of **Ketamine.**

- **PCP** availability and abuse continues to be reported in Cleveland.

- Abuse of over-the-counter medications containing **dextromethorphan (DMX) (eg. Coricidin® HBP)** has been reported by treatment providers in Cincinnati and Dayton, particularly among youth 12-16 years of age.

- **Marijuana** availability and abuse continues to be reported at very high levels by users, treatment providers, and law enforcement professionals state-wide.

Full OSAM reports are available at: http://www.odadas.state.oh.us.