

Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services
The Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring Network
June 2007- January 2008
Executive Summary

This Executive Summary highlights findings presented at the Ohio Substance Abuse Monitoring Network (OSAM) meeting held in Columbus, Ohio, on March 21, 2008. The report is based on data collected between June 2007 and January 2008 by Regional Epidemiologists in Athens and surrounding counties (rural southeast), the Akron and Canton area, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo, 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. Crime labs in Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Toledo, and Canton as well as labs of the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCI&I) in Richfield (covering Cleveland, Akron and Youngstown), London (Southern and Central Ohio), and Bowling Green (Northwest Ohio, excluding Toledo) were surveyed to collect additional data on drug purity and availability. Researchers at Wright State University reviewed reports and compiled this summary of major findings.

CRACK COCAINE

- **Despite a brief summertime “drought” noted in several areas of the state, crack availability remained high overall throughout Ohio. Increasing acceptability and abuse by adolescents and older adults were also reported.**

Users and crime lab personnel reported high availability of crack cocaine throughout Ohio despite a brief summertime “drought.” Most crime labs estimated crack-cocaine purity to be high (above 60%), but some users reported declining quality. Crack-cocaine prices tend to range between \$40 and \$60 per gram in most areas of the state; higher prices were reported in Athens (\$70-\$100). Several areas of the state noted increasing acceptability of crack-cocaine use. Users remain diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status. Most areas of the state continue to report crack abuse among adolescents (14-18 year-olds) and older adults (65-80 year-olds). Increases in crack use among Hispanics were reported in Dayton and Youngstown. Crack is still used often with alcohol, benzodiazepines and marijuana; additionally, it was reported that crack use is sometimes accompanied by use of heroin in Cincinnati, Dayton, and Columbus. Smoking remains the primary method of administration, but in some areas of the state a slight increase in crack injection among intravenous heroin users was noted.

POWDERED COCAINE

- **Moderate to high availability of powdered cocaine was reported throughout the state. A brief summertime “drought” was mentioned by users in Akron, Columbus, Cleveland and Dayton.**

The availability of powdered cocaine remained lower than that of crack cocaine, but was generally rated as moderate to high across the state. A summertime “drought” was mentioned by users in Akron, Columbus, Cleveland, and Dayton. The quantifying crime labs estimated the purity of powdered cocaine as either moderate (30%-60%) or high (above 60%). Prices per gram ranged from \$40 to \$70 in most areas of the state, but were higher in Athens (\$100) and lower in Cincinnati (\$25-\$40) and Youngstown (\$30-\$40). Powdered cocaine is frequently used with alcohol and marijuana. Intranasal inhalation remained the most common method of administration. Injection use of powdered cocaine was reported as common among heroin injectors in most areas of the state, and increasing in Athens. Smoking marijuana

joints laced with powdered cocaine was reported in Cleveland and Cincinnati. Powdered cocaine was reported to be used across a broad spectrum of user groups. Several areas of the state noted a continuing trend of powdered cocaine use among adolescents and young adults, and among middle-aged and older males from more affluent socio-economic backgrounds. Dayton, Toledo, and Columbus area reports indicated a continuing trend of powdered cocaine use among individuals involved in crack-cocaine dealing. In the Columbus area, Hispanic males were identified as another group of powdered cocaine users.

HEROIN

- **Most urban areas of the state continued to report moderate to high availability of heroin. Increasing availability of black tar heroin was reported in several areas of the state. Decreases in heroin prices were indicated in Columbus and Toledo.**

According to drug user and crime lab reports, heroin availability was moderate to high across the state. Notable increases in availability were reported in Columbus, Toledo, and the rural southeast. Most areas continued to report brown powder as the most commonly available form of heroin. Black tar remained a predominant form in Columbus and the rural southeast, and increased in availability in Cincinnati and Toledo. Brown heroin sold for \$100-\$130 per gram in most areas, except Toledo where prices were substantially lower (\$50-\$70), and Cleveland and Akron, where prices ranged from \$150 to \$200 per gram. Black tar heroin typically sold for higher prices than brown powder heroin in most areas of the state, except Columbus, where users reported buying tar heroin for as low as \$50 per gram. Substance abuse treatment providers noted increases in heroin-related treatment admissions in most areas of the state. White youth and young adults, typically from suburban communities and of higher socio-economic status, were identified as a predominant group of users. Heroin use in conjunction with cocaine HCl, benzodiazepines, and pharmaceutical opioids remains common in most areas of the state.

PHARMACEUTICAL OPIOIDS

- **Continuing decline in street availability of OxyContin® and increases in the availability of methadone tablets and wafers were noted across the state. All areas reported cases of Suboxone® diversion and abuse.**

According to user, treatment provider and crime lab personnel reports, Vicodin® (hydrocodone and acetaminophen) and Percocet® (oxycodone and acetaminophen) continue to be the most commonly diverted and abused pharmaceutical opioids across the state. Availability of OxyContin® (oxycodone controlled release) was rated as moderate and declining. Most areas noted moderate and increasing availability of methadone tablets and wafers. Increases in street availability of methadone liquid were reported in Columbus and Toledo. Most areas of the state reported low availability of Dilaudid® (hydromorphone), but the Cleveland and Akron areas reported increases. Street availability of Duragesic® patches (fentanyl transdermal system) was rated as low in most areas, except in Youngstown and Akron where it was estimated as moderate. Increases in street availability of Suboxone® (buprenorphine and naloxone) were noted in all reporting areas of the state.

Prices of most prescription analgesics, including hydrocodone, oxycodone, and methadone, remained at between \$0.50 and \$1 per milligram of opioid content. For example, a 40-milligram OxyContin® tablet may sell for about \$20-\$40, and Vicodin® ES (7.5-milligram hydrocodone/750-milligram of acetaminophen) sells for \$3-\$5. Users interviewed in the Athens area noted decreases in OxyContin® prices. Several areas of the state, including Akron and Cincinnati, reported Suboxone® prices as low as \$4 per 8-milligram tablet.

Prescription opioid abuse continues to be more commonly reported among white teenagers and young adults, as well as white, middle-aged individuals with a history of chronic pain. Oral ingestion remains the most common method of administration for most pharmaceutical opioids. Intranasal inhalation of crushed OxyContin® tablets was reported as common.

BENZODIAZEPINES AND OTHER PHARMACEUTICALS

- **Xanax® remains the most commonly abused benzodiazepine. Increases in Klonopin® abuse were noted across the state.**

Users and crime lab professionals in most areas of the state reported moderate to high availability of benzodiazepines, although lower availability was noted in the Cleveland area. Xanax® (alprazolam) was rated as the most easily accessible pharmaceutical tranquilizer, and users indicated an increasing trend of Klonopin® (clonazepam) diversion in most areas of the state. Street prices of benzodiazepines range from \$1 to \$5 per tablet, depending on dosage. Participants in several areas of the state reported a common trend of benzodiazepine abuse among adolescents and young adults as well as among females between 30 and 50 years of age. Pharmaceutical tranquilizers are commonly abused with alcohol and marijuana. They are also frequently used in conjunction with heroin, methadone and other pharmaceutical opioids, and to come down from a crack high. Some users in the Columbus area reported trading or selling their benzodiazepine prescriptions on the street to obtain other illicit drugs.

- **All areas of the state reported cases of Seroquel® diversion and abuse.**

In the current reporting period, reports of Seroquel® (quetiapine fumarate) abuse surfaced in all OSAM reporting areas. The drug usually sells for \$1-\$3 per tablet. Several areas of the state reported Seroquel® abuse among crack-cocaine users. In the Dayton area, treatment providers and school counselors indicated cases of Seroquel® abuse among adolescents.

- **Increases in Soma® availability and abuse were noted in the Columbus area.**

In Columbus, users noted an increasing trend of Soma® (carisoprodol) abuse, especially among white females between 16 and 30 years of age. The tablets typically sell for \$5 each. The Columbus crime lab has been reporting moderate availability of Soma® tablets since the spring of 2007. Focus group participants and crime labs in most other areas of the state indicated low availability of carisoprodol.

METHAMPHETAMINE

- **Continuing decreases in methamphetamine availability and abuse were noted in most areas of the state.**

Methamphetamine availability was rated low and decreasing in most areas of the state by crime lab professionals and users, although users in Dayton, Cleveland, and Columbus indicated some increases in availability of methamphetamine. Powder methamphetamine remained the most commonly seen form across the state, although Columbus reported higher prevalence of glass-type methamphetamine, and the Toledo crime lab indicated that methamphetamine was commonly found in Ecstasy tablets. Most areas reported moderate purity of methamphetamine. Smoking remained one of the most common methods of methamphetamine use. Injection of methamphetamine was reported in Akron and Cincinnati. Methamphetamine use remained more commonly reported among whites than other ethnic/racial groups. Typical age range of methamphetamine users was between 20 and 40 years.

MARIJUANA

- **Marijuana availability and use remain high across the state. Users reported excellent quality and drastic increases in availability statewide owing to “harvest time.”**

Users, treatment providers, and crime lab professionals reported high availability of marijuana in all areas of the state, although the Cincinnati crime lab indicated moderate availability. Many users reported an increase in quality of the drug. Prices remained relatively stable with low-grade marijuana selling for \$40-\$90 per ounce and medium-grade selling for \$100-\$175 per ounce. High-grade marijuana, such as “hydro,” was reported as moderately available in most areas of the state, and selling for \$300 and higher per ounce. Some decreases in availability of high-grade marijuana were noted in Youngstown, Cleveland, and Columbus. According to Dayton and Toledo reports, marijuana remains the most common drug of abuse among adolescents entering treatment. Marijuana is commonly used with alcohol, benzodiazepines, and cocaine. Crack cocaine added to marijuana joints or blunts (“Primo”, “Woolie”, or “Coco Puffin”) was reported in Columbus, Dayton, and Toledo. The practice of users dipping marijuana joints or blunts in Tussionex® (a cough syrup containing hydrocodone) was reported in Youngstown. Cleveland area participants indicated an increasing use of marijuana laced with PCP.

HALLUCINOGENS

- **Ecstasy (MDMA) availability and use have been increasing in most areas of the state.**

Across the state, drug users and crime lab professionals indicated notable increases in Ecstasy availability, and rated it as moderate to high. Prices have declined throughout the state with many areas reporting prices as low as \$7-\$10 per Ecstasy tablet. Although Ecstasy use has been traditionally associated with white youth and young adults, an increasing trend of Ecstasy abuse was noted among African Americans in Dayton, Columbus, and Toledo. According to focus groups conducted in Toledo and Dayton, Ecstasy has a reputation as a sex drug among some user groups. According to the data obtained in several crime labs across the state, besides MDMA, Ecstasy tablets often contain a number of other substances, including methamphetamine, 3-trifluoromethylphenylpiperazine, benzylpiperazine, and ketamine.

- **Availability of LSD and psilocybin was reported as low to moderate in most areas of the state.**

According to user and crime lab reports, LSD and psilocybin mushroom (“shrooms”) availability was low to moderate in most OSAM reporting areas, although the BCI&I in Richfield indicated a notable increase in LSD cases. Focus group participants in Cleveland, Athens, and Dayton reported seasonal increases in the drugs owing to summer concerts and festivals. LSD typically sells for \$5-\$10 per “hit” and mushrooms were priced at \$25-\$50 per 1/8 ounce.

- **Increases in PCP availability and abuse in the Cleveland area.**

User and crime lab reports indicated high and increasing availability of PCP (phencyclidine) in the Cleveland area. According to users, PCP sells for \$450 per ounce. Crime lab professionals in Dayton indicated “low” availability of the drug and the other labs reported no PCP cases.

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