

### Inside This Issue

SW Border Strategy to Emphasize 'Strong Communities'.....	1
New Survey Results 'Disappointing,' Says Director .....	1
Findings from the 2010 Monitoring the Future Study .....	2
Training for Treatment Providers along the Southwest Border .....	4



### Office of National Drug Control Policy

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*ONDCP seeks to foster healthy individuals and safe communities by effectively leading the Nation's effort to reduce drug use and its consequences.*

## Southwest Border Strategy to Focus on Building 'Strong Communities' on Both Sides of the Border

National Drug Control Policy Director Gil Kerlikowske convened leaders from more than 20 U.S. Government agencies in December to discuss plans for the 2011 *National Southwest Border Counter-narcotics Strategy*.

The *SWB Strategy* seeks to protect public health and safety by substantially reducing the northbound flow of illegal drugs and the southbound flow of illegal weapons and proceeds along the border with Mexico.

Since the release of the last *SWB Strategy* in June 2009 by Director Kerlikowske, Attorney General Eric Holder, and Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, significant progress has been made in a number of key areas, including:

- Stemming the outbound flow of illegal bulk cash and weapons;
- Interdiction at and between ports of entry;
- Countering smuggling in the air and maritime domains;
- Investigations and prosecutions;
- Border security and law enforcement technology;
- Intelligence collection and information sharing; and
- Enhancing cooperation with Mexico on counterdrug efforts.

The 2011 *SWB Strategy*, which will be submitted to Congress in April, builds on this progress while also charting new courses in our anti-drug efforts in the border region.

Last summer, ONDCP conducted extensive consultations with Federal, State, local, and Tribal law enforcement officials in all four Southwest border states. Participants in these meetings repeatedly underscored the importance of considering the unique needs of border communities and encouraged the inclusion of demand reduction as an essential tool in reducing the drug problem in the border region.

As a result of this consultation process, the new *SWB Strategy* places increased emphasis on building "strong communities" on both sides of the border, enhancing drug prevention and treatment services, instilling a culture of lawfulness, and interrupting the cycle of drug use, violence, and crime.

This new emphasis complements our ongoing interdiction, investigative, and bilateral cooperation efforts and will result, ultimately, in a comprehensive plan to reduce the threat illegal drugs pose to communities on the border and throughout our Nation.

### New Data Reveal Increases in Youth Drug Use

The following is a statement from Director Kerlikowske regarding results of the 2010 *Monitoring the Future* survey of youth drug use, released in December.

"The increases in youth drug use reflected in the *Monitoring the Future* Study are disappointing, and mixed messages about drug legalization, particularly marijuana legalization, and "medical" marijuana may be to blame. Such messages certainly don't help parents who are trying to prevent young people from using drugs. The Obama Administration is aggressively addressing the threat of drug use and its consequences through a balanced and comprehensive drug control strategy, but we need parents and other interested adults as full partners in teaching young people about the risks and harms associated with drug use, including marijuana and prescription drugs. No young person in today's competitive world is going to be helped by using marijuana or other drugs. And youth are less likely to use drugs if they have involved adults who set clear rules and communicate that drug use is unacceptable."

## 2010 Monitoring the Future Reveals Troubling Trends, Particularly Among 8<sup>th</sup> Graders, in Drug Use and Perceptions of Drugs' Harms

Results of the 2010 Monitoring the Future Study, a nationally representative annual survey of 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, show increases in drug use as well as continued decreases in the perceived harm of using drugs – a worrisome combination.

Of particular concern is that increases in use are occurring among 8<sup>th</sup> graders, the youngest of the three grades surveyed, suggesting potential future increases in drug use (see figure 1). Last year's MTF documented declines in the perceived risk of using marijuana occasionally or regularly among 8<sup>th</sup> graders; in 2010, use among 8<sup>th</sup> graders increased. This is a pattern, often seen in the MTF data, in which declines in perceived risk precede increases in use by one or two years. In 2010, perceived risk of using marijuana declined among 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

The 2010 MTF results, released in December, found increases over 2009 in past-month and past-year use of marijuana among 8<sup>th</sup> graders – increases that, in turn, drove rising rates of past-month and past-year use of any illicit drug among 8<sup>th</sup> graders (figure 2). Daily use of marijuana among all three grades increased between 2009 and 2010 (figure 3).

### Trends from 2009-2010

- Past-month and past-year use of **marijuana** increased among 8<sup>th</sup> graders only. These increases drove similar increases in the past-month and past-year use of any illicit drug among 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Daily **marijuana** use increased among 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders

### Drug Use Remains High

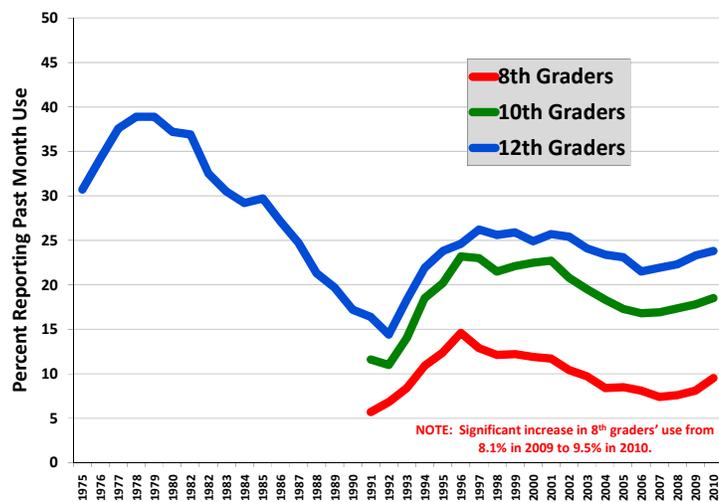
- After alcohol, **marijuana** is far and away the most commonly used drug, with past-year use reported by 34.8% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders, 27.5% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 13.7% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Among 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, past-month use of **marijuana** exceeds past-month **cigarette** use.
- About one in twelve high school seniors reported using **Vicodin** in the past year, closely followed by non-medical use of seven other legitimate drugs. However, Vicodin use was down for the first time since the question was added to the survey in 2002.
- Among 8<sup>th</sup> graders, past-year use of **inhalants** ranks second (after marijuana), followed by non-medical use of seven legitimate drugs.

### Changes in Attitudes and Perceptions, 2009-2010

- Among 8<sup>th</sup> graders, three indicators of disapproval of others who **try or smoke marijuana** worsened:
  - Trying once or twice
  - Smoking occasionally
  - Smoking regularly
- Among 10<sup>th</sup> graders, those who perceived "great risk" of harm associated with **smoking marijuana** **occasionally or regularly** declined.

See MTF, page 3

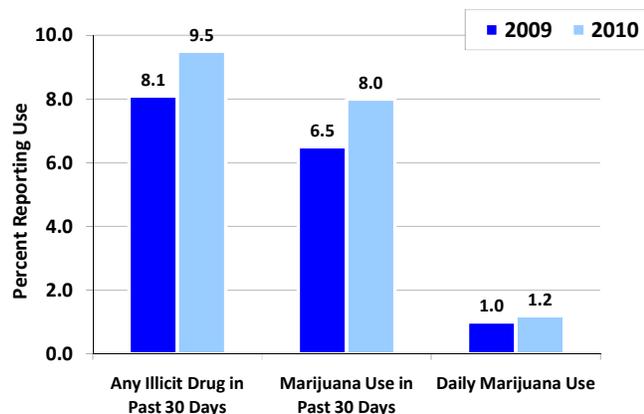
Figure 1  
Trends in Current Use of Any Illicit Drug (Past 30 Days)



12/2010

Source: 2010 Monitoring the Future study (December 2010).

Figure 2  
Among 8<sup>th</sup> Graders, Significantly Higher Current Use of Any Illicit Drug Fueled by Marijuana; Daily Use of Marijuana Also Higher, 2009 vs. 2010



12/2010

Source: 2010 Monitoring the Future study (December 2010).

MTF, continued from page 2

- Among 12th graders, those who perceived “great risk” of harm associated with **smoking marijuana regularly** declined.
- Among 12th graders, those who perceived risk of **using heroin occasionally or regularly** declined.
- Perception of risk in **using amphetamines regularly** declined.
- Among 12th graders, disapproval of others who **try or smoke marijuana occasionally** worsened.
- Among 12th graders, the perceived risk of **using cocaine occasionally or regularly** declined.

### Good News

Decreases in the use of various substances between 2009 and 2010 include the following:

- **Vicodin:** Among 12th graders, past-year use decreased.
- **Alcohol:** Past 30-day use among 12<sup>th</sup> graders fell, as did the prevalence of binge drinking (five or more drinks in a row) within the past two weeks (figure 4).
- **Gamma-hydroxybutyric acid (GHB):** Past-year use among 10th graders fell.
- **Steroids:** Past-year use among 8th graders declined.
- **Flavored alcoholic beverages:** Among 12<sup>th</sup> graders, lifetime, past-year, and past-month use declined.

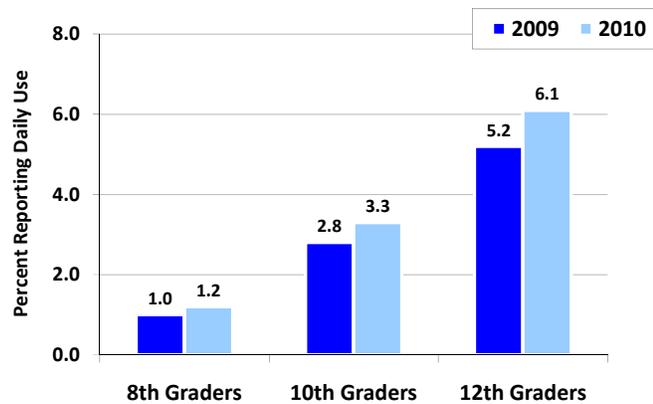
### Perceived Harm 2009-2010

- Among 10th graders, the perceived harm of trying powder cocaine once or twice increased.
- Among 8th graders, two measures of the perceived harm of trying or using various substances improved (increased) in 2010: trying crack once or twice, or trying powder cocaine once or twice.

### Perceived Availability 2009-2010

- Several measures of the perceived availability of various substances improved (declined) among high school seniors in 2010: crack, cocaine powder, meth ice, and heroin.
- Among 10th graders, the perceived availability of cocaine powder decreased.

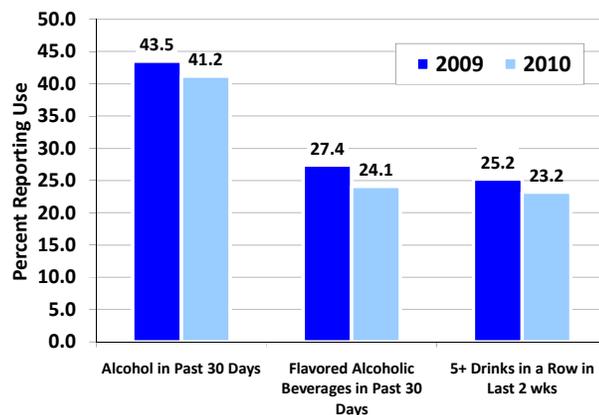
Figure 3  
In All Grades, Significantly Higher Daily Use of Marijuana, 2009 vs. 2010



12/2010

Source: 2010 Monitoring the Future study (December 2010).

Figure 4  
Among 12<sup>th</sup> Graders, Significantly Lower Current Alcohol Use; Binge Drinking Also Lower, 2009 vs. 2010



12/2010

Source: 2010 Monitoring the Future study (December 2010).

## A Binational Training Project for Treatment Providers Along the Southwest Border

The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) sponsored a training conference last month in El Paso, Texas, for a mixed group of Mexican and U.S. drug treatment providers. Support for the two-day session was provided by the Office of Mexico's First Lady and the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, with participation from Mexico's National Council Against Addictions (CONADIC).

At the conference, Mexican instructors from CONADIC taught the group how to recognize drug abusers, particularly young people, and refer them for appropriate follow-up. Referral training included information about voluntary treatment options.

U.S. instructors from the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) covered topics such as development of community anti-drug coalitions, school-based and substance-abuse prevention strategies, and healthy lifestyles for individuals and families.

This first binational training pilot project was conceived following the February 2010 U.S.-Mexico Demand Reduction Conference in Washington, DC. At that conference, Mexico's First Lady, Margarita Zavala, described efforts in her country to train drug abuse treatment providers, educators, and other front-line personnel likely to come in contact with drug users.

The written material, or "toolkit," used in the Mexican training program was reviewed by U.S. experts, who cited the kits' potential value as an aid in Spanish-speaking communities in the United States. ONDCP requested permission to use the material in a training environment that included both U.S. and Mexican students in the border region.

If the potential exists, ONDCP will seek opportunities

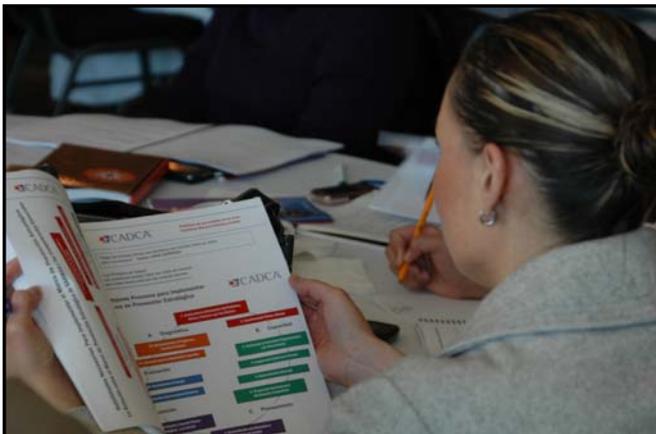


Eric Siervo, a representative from Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), talks about community coalition building at last month's ONDCP-sponsored training conference for drug treatment providers in El Paso, Texas.

***If the potential exists, ONDCP will seek opportunities to revise and expand the program to other border locations or Spanish-speaking communities in the United States.***

to revise and expand the pilot program to other locations along the border or to Spanish-speaking communities in U.S. cities.

Because the effort is designed to prepare communities to prevent drug use and recognize and deal with symptoms before addiction occurs, the project is in line with ONDCP's key prevention initiative, and supports the objective stated in the *National Drug Control Strategy* to strengthen prevention efforts along the Southwest border.



A participant, left, reviews CADCA materials at the El Paso conference. Other training materials for the two-day session included the Mexican Government's "toolkit," right.

