



## SAMHSA News Release

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### National survey shows a rise in illicit drug use from 2008 to 2010

#### Increased rates of marijuana use drive increase, especially among young adults

The use of illicit drugs among Americans increased between 2008 and 2010 according to a national survey conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) shows that 22.6 million Americans 12 or older (8.9-percent of the population) were current illicit drug users. The rate of use in 2010 was similar to the rate in 2009 (8.7-percent), but remained above the 2008 rate (8-percent).

An increased rate in the current use of marijuana seems to be one of the prime factors in the overall rise in illicit drug use. In 2010, 17.4 million Americans were current users of marijuana - compared to 14.4 million in 2007. This represents an increase in the rate of current marijuana use in the population 12 and older from 5.8-percent in 2007 to 6.9-percent in 2010.

Another disturbing trend is the continuing rise in the rate of current illicit drug use among young adults aged 18 to 25 -- from 19.6-percent in 2008 to 21.2-percent in 2009 and 21.5-percent in 2010. This increase was also driven in large part by a rise in the rate of current marijuana use among this population.

The annual NSDUH survey, released by SAMHSA at the kickoff of the 22nd annual *National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)* observance also shows that use rates for nonmedical use of prescription drugs, hallucinogens and inhalants have remained at approximately the same levels as 2009, and are also similar to rates in 2002.

"We stand at a crossroads in our nation's efforts to prevent substance abuse and addiction," said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde. "These statistics represent real lives that are at risk from the harmful and sometimes devastating effects of illicit drug use. This nation cannot afford to risk losing more individuals, families and communities to illicit drugs or from other types of substance abuse -- instead, we must do everything we can to effectively promote prevention, treatment and recovery programs across our country."

"Emerging research reveals potential links between state laws permitting access to smoked medical marijuana and higher rates of marijuana use," said Gil Kerlikowske, Director of National

Drug Control Policy. "In light of what we know regarding the serious harm of illegal drug use, I urge every family - but particularly those in states targeted by pro-drug political campaigns - to redouble their efforts to shield young people from serious harm by educating them about the real health and safety consequences caused by illegal drug use."

Among the survey's other noteworthy findings is that the majority (55-percent) of persons aged 12 and older who had used prescription pain relievers non-medically in the past 12 months received them from a friend or relative for free. Only 4.4-percent of those misusing pain relievers in the past year reported getting their supply from a drug dealer and 0.4-percent bought it on the Internet.

Despite some troubling trends, the 2010 NSDUH showed some areas of improvement in terms of lower use levels for certain substances. The number of current methamphetamine users decreased by roughly half from 2006 to 2010 -- from 731,000 people age 12 and older (0.3-percent) to 353,000 (0.1-percent). Cocaine use has also declined, from 2.4 million current users in 2006 to 1.5 million in 2010. In addition, among 12 - 17 year olds there were decreases between 2009 and 2010 in current drinking rates (from 14.7-percent down to 13.6-percent) and current tobacco use rates (from 11.6-percent to 10.7-percent).

As in previous years, the 2010 NSDUH shows a vast disparity between the number of people needing specialized treatment for a substance abuse problem and the number who actually receive it. According to the survey, 23.1 million Americans aged 12 or older (9.1-percent) needed specialized treatment for a substance abuse problem, but only 2.6 million (or roughly 11.2 percent of them) received it.

NSDUH is a scientifically conducted annual survey of approximately 67,500 people throughout the country, aged 12 and older. Because of its statistical power, it is the nation's premier source of statistical information on the scope and nature of many substance abuse behavioral health issues affecting the nation.

The complete survey findings are available on the SAMHSA Web site at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k10NSDUH/2k10Results.htm>. For more information about SAMHSA visit: <http://www.samhsa.gov>.

*National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)* is a national observance that recognizes the accomplishments of people in recovery from mental and substance use disorders, the contributions of treatment providers, and spreads the positive message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, that prevention works, treatment is effective and people can and do recover. Electronic versions of *Recovery Month* materials are available at <http://www.recoverymonth.gov>.

<http://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/1109075503.aspx>

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# National drug survey shows big drop in methamphetamine use

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By Donna Leinwand Leger, USA TODAY

Marijuana is as popular as ever while methamphetamine is falling out of favor, a national drug-use survey has found.

Nearly one in 10 Americans report regularly using illegal drugs, including marijuana, cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants or prescription drugs used recreationally, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health made public today. The survey, sponsored by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), collects the data from interviews with 67,500 randomly selected people 12 years or older.

Marijuana, with about 17.4 million regular users, is by far the most commonly used drug. Its popularity is growing: 6.9% of the population reported using marijuana regularly, up from 5.8% in 2007, the survey found. Among 12- to 17-year-olds, 7.4% reported having used marijuana in the past month, about the same as last year.

Drug use among young adults 18 to 25 has inched up steadily from 19.6% in 2008 to 21.5% in 2010, driven largely by an increase in marijuana use, the survey found. Marijuana use in that age group grew from 16.5% in 2008 to 18.5% in 2010.

Gil Kerlikowske, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, attributed the uptick in marijuana use to the increase in the number of states that have approved it for medical use. Delaware in May became the 16th state to approve medical marijuana.

"People keep calling it medicine, and that's the wrong message for young people to hear," Kerlikowske said.

Marijuana use rates rise and fall in medical marijuana states in the same fashion as they do in non-medical marijuana states, said Bill Piper, director of national affairs for the Drug Policy Alliance, which advocates for decriminalizing marijuana.

"In the field of medicine, whether or not a youth might abuse something doesn't determine whether or not an adult should have access to a medication and whether a doctor should prescribe it," Piper said.

Meanwhile, methamphetamine use, which raced across the USA for a decade, has declined sharply. The number of past-month users declined from 731,000 in 2006 to 353,000 in 2010.

Since methamphetamine emerged as a problem drug in 2001, states have outlawed or restricted the sale of ingredients used to concoct homemade meth, such as pseudoephedrine found in cold medicines such as Sudafed, said Peter Delany, director of the Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality at SAMHSA.

"We've seen better attention for law enforcement and policy changes. You can't get all the Sudafed you want anymore," Delany said.

The percentage of the population who used prescription drugs, such as narcotic painkillers, for non-medical reasons stayed at 2.7%. The survey found that 55% of them got the drugs free from a friend or relative; 11.4% bought them from a friend or relative, and 5% stole them from a friend or relative. Just 4% purchased them from a drug dealer, the survey found.

Prescription-drug abuse has gotten widespread attention over the past two years from news media and public health authorities, Kerlikowske said. Police and lawmakers acted quickly to curb the problem, he said.

When the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention called it a public health epidemic, he said, law enforcement agencies cracked down on doctors who write thousands of prescriptions with little or no medical examination and states created programs to monitor the prescribing of narcotics.

"I think we're starting to see some positive results, but we're by no means out of the woods," Kerlikowske said.

On Wednesday, the Drug Enforcement Administration clamped down on "bath salts," the nickname for a synthetic drug that some public health experts have identified as an emerging drug problem. The synthetic drugs, often sold at convenience stores under names such as "Cloud Nine" or "Ivory Wave," allegedly mimic the effects of cocaine or LSD and can cause hallucinations and paranoia. The American Association of Poison Control Centers has logged 4,137 reports of illness from those drugs as of July 31, up from 302 calls in 2010.

The DEA used its emergency powers to temporarily control the sale of three synthetic stimulants, Mephedrone, MDPV and Methyone, used to make the salts. The action makes possession and selling the chemicals illegal in the United States for at least a year while the DEA and the Department of Health and Human Services study them.

<http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/story/2011-09-08/National-drug-survey-shows-big-drop-in-methamphetamine-use/50309360/1>