

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration

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New study shows dramatic shifts in substance abuse treatment admissions among the states between 1998 and 2008

Nationwide percentage of treatment admissions primarily linked to alcohol has declined, while the percentage primarily linked to illicit drugs has increased

Although the overall rate of admissions to substance abuse treatment in the U.S. remained stable between 1998 and 2008, at about 770 admissions for every 100,000 persons in the population, a new study shows striking changes and variations in admission rates by region. For example, the rate of admissions for alcohol as the primary drug has declined by 15 percent nationally. However admission rates for alcohol in West North Central states (Ark., Iowa, Kan., Minn., Mo., N.D., Neb. and S.D.) remained the same.

At the same time that admissions for alcohol treatment were declining, admission rates per 100,000 population for illicit drug use were increasing. In fact, one consistent pattern in every region was the increase in the admission rate for marijuana use which rose 30 percent nationally. From 1998 through 2008, marijuana treatment admission rates were highest in the West North Central and Middle Atlantic states (N.J., N.Y. and Pa.).

As indicated in an earlier SAMHSA report, *Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions Involving Abuse of Pain Relievers: 1998 and 2008*: <http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k10/230/230PainRelvr2k10.cfm>, the treatment admission rate for opiates other than heroin (mainly narcotic pain relievers) rose 345 percent nationwide during these 11 years. The new study shows that increased admissions for pain reliever abuse occurred in every region of the nation and were highest in the New England (Conn., Mass., Maine, N.H., R.I. and Vt.) and the East South Central states (Ala., Ky., Miss. and Tenn.).

Nationwide, the admission rate for methamphetamine treatment was 53 percent higher in 2008 than in 1998, although the level has dropped significantly and consistently from its peak in 2005. Methamphetamine admission rates were highest during this period in the Pacific (Alaska, Calif., Hawaii, Ore. and Wash.), West North Central and Mountain states (Ariz., Colo., Idaho, Mont., Nev., N.M., Utah and Wyo.).

The new study provided mixed news concerning heroin -- nationwide the rate of heroin admissions dropped by 3 percent from 1998 to 2008, but this drop was not uniform and in many states the levels have actually risen. Heroin treatment admission rates were consistently highest in the New England and Middle Atlantic states.

In terms of cocaine the news was more encouraging -- a 23 percent reduction in the cocaine treatment admission rate nationally over this period and decreases in every region of the country. The Middle Atlantic states had the highest levels of cocaine admission rates throughout this period.

"This study provides insight into the regional nature of substance abuse by highlighting the shifting trends in the reasons for admission to substance abuse treatment," said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde, J.D. "By carefully analyzing these data, policy makers, public health experts and behavioral health service providers can better direct limited resources and meet the treatment needs of people living in states and communities."

"Drug addiction is a disease that requires the same kind of evidence-based, public health remedies called for with any chronic disease," said Gil Kerlikowske, Director of National Drug Control Policy. "This substantial rise in drug treatment admissions for illicit drugs, particularly for marijuana and misuse of prescription drugs, shines a necessary spotlight on these problems and the need for early intervention, treatment, and recovery support services for those affected by these disorders. That is why the Obama Administration has requested an increase of \$137 million for FY 2011 to expand access for drug treatment programs across the United States."

The study, *State Admissions to Substance Abuse Treatment Services: TEDS 1998 - 2008*, was based on data from SAMHSA's Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) -- a reporting system involving treatment facilities from across the country. The study was developed as part of the agency's strategic initiative on data, outcomes, and quality -- an effort to inform policy makers and service providers on the nature and scope of behavioral health issues.

The full report is available at: <http://www.dasis.samhsa.gov/teds08/teds2k8sweb.pdf>. It provides detailed charts and tables showing the admission rates for a wide variety of substances for each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico for each year over the course of this 11 year period. It also provides data by Census divisions -- groups of states delineated by the Census Bureau. These materials allow easy analyses of changing admission trends for any state or region of the country.

For related publications and information, visit <http://www.samhsa.gov/>.

SAMHSA is a public health agency within the Department of Health and Human Services. Its mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

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