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An Agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

SAMHSA
News Release

For Immediate Release
August 5, 2004

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Iowa Has Lowest Rate of Illicit Drug Use Washington D.C. Has Highest

Past month use of illegal drugs ranged from a low of 6.1 percent in Iowa to a high of 12.4 percent in the District of Columbia for persons aged 12 or older, according to a new report from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The report, "State Estimates of Substance Use from the 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health", estimates state rates of use of illegal drugs, binge drinking, serious mental illness and tobacco use.

Alabama had the lowest rate, 4.4 percent, of past month use of marijuana among persons aged 12 or older. Other states in the lowest fifth for current use of marijuana among persons aged 12 or older included Georgia, Iowa, Mississippi, New Jersey, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and West Virginia. The District of Columbia had the highest rate, 10.8 percent.

"State-by-state data is a powerful tool for policymakers at the federal, state and local levels to identify state prevention and treatment needs. It is clear from the findings that illicit drug, alcohol and tobacco use vary substantially among states and regions," SAMHSA Administrator Charles Curie said. "Because of the many improvements made in the 2002 Survey, the data creates new baselines. These data will take on greater value over time, as more data are accumulated and trends can be assessed in greater detail, at both the national and the state levels."

In the category of past month use of any illicit drug other than marijuana, Alaska, Arizona, the District of Columbia, Louisiana, Nevada, North Carolina, **Oklahoma**, Oregon, Rhode Island and Washington composed the highest tier, with Arizona having the highest prevalence rate, 4.9 percent, among all persons aged 12 or older. In the 18-25 age group, the rate of past month use of any illicit drug other than marijuana was highest in Rhode Island, 14.1 percent. Among youth 12-17, the rate was highest in North Carolina (8.1 percent).

The highest rate of past year cocaine use among persons 12 or older was found in the District of Columbia (4.1 percent). This compares to a national prevalence rate of 2.5 percent. But while the District had the highest rate for cocaine use for 12 and older and age 26 and older, it was in the lowest fifth for those aged 12-17 and for those aged 18-25. Colorado was the only state that ranked in the top fifth of states for all three age groups – 12-17, 18-25 and 26 or older.

Utah had the lowest rate of binge alcohol use among all persons aged 12 or older, 16.6 percent, while North Dakota had the highest rate, 30 percent. North Dakota also had the highest rate among those age 18 to 25, 55.8 percent, and among youth 12 to 17, 16.4 percent. Binge alcohol use is defined as drinking five or more drinks on one or more occasions in the past month.

Approximately 71.8 million Americans aged 12 or older used some form of tobacco in the past month in 2002, about 30 percent of the population. Utah had the lowest rate, 22 percent, and Arkansas the highest prevalence, 39.9 percent. For cigarettes, Kentucky had the highest rate of past month use in the nation, 33.8 percent, and Utah had the lowest rate, 18.9 percent.

The 2002 National Survey on Drug Use and Health estimates that 8.3 percent of the population aged 18 or older had serious mental illness in the past year. Oklahoma reported the highest rate in the nation, 11.4 percent, while New Jersey reported the lowest rate, 6.5 percent.

The 2002 survey is based on interviews with 68,126 respondents who were interviewed in their homes. This includes persons residing in dormitories or homeless shelters. The interviews represent 98 percent of the population ages 12 and older. Not included in the survey are persons in the active military, in prisons or other institutionalized populations or who are homeless. The new report presents state estimates for 20 measures of substance use or mental disorders. The report is available on the web at <http://oas.samhsa.gov/states.htm>.

SAMHSA, a public health agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the lead federal agency for improving accountability, quality and effectiveness of the Nation's substance abuse prevention, addictions treatment and mental health services.