Patterns and Trends of Drug Use in Atlanta, Georgia: June 2013

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Summary of Key Findings for the 2012 Reporting Period:

- **There were decreases in cocaine indicators.**
- **There was also an increase in methamphetamine indicators.**

Cocaine

According to the available indicators, cocaine use in Atlanta continued to decline. Cocaine primary public drug treatment admissions decreased from 12.8 percent in 2010, to 10.8 percent in 2011, and to 10.5 percent in 2012. However, compared with the previous 10 years, a greater proportion of 25–34-year-olds sought public substance abuse treatment for cocaine in Atlanta. Both the State Medical Examiner (ME)'s Office and the Georgia Poison Control Center reported decreases in the count of cocaine-related incidents, specifically the number of deaths and poisonings. Cocaine reports from drug items seized and analyzed by National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) laboratories decreased, from 34 percent in 2011 to 22 percent in 2012. However, cocaine continued to constitute the highest percentage of overall drug reports from analyzed items.

Alcohol

Alcohol (alcohol only and alcohol in combination with other drugs) was the most commonly reported drug used in Atlanta based on available sources. It contributed to nearly one-half of all treatment admissions. Public treatment data indicated that alcohol was the most commonly used secondary drug among cocaine and marijuana users. While ranking first among drug-related crisis line calls in Atlanta in 2012, the number of calls related to alcohol increased from 20,404 in 2011 to 21,410 in 2012.

Marijuana

The number of clients seeking public treatment for marijuana as a primary drug of choice slightly decreased, from 17 percent in 2011 to 16.3 percent in 2012, making marijuana the most commonly used illicit drug in Atlanta.

Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine-related public treatment admissions continued to increase year over year (from 5.2 percent in 2010, to 5.7 percent in 2011, and to 6.4 percent in 2012). In 2012, the proportion of individuals seeking public treatment for methamphetamine abuse in Atlanta was at the highest level since 2006. The State ME's Office reported a slight decrease in deaths with methamphetamine present in fiscal year (FY) 2012 compared with FY 2011. NFLIS data also indicated an increase in methamphetamine reports among seized and analyzed drug items (from n=2,660 reports in 2011 to n=3,399 in 2012).

Heroin

Heroin abuse indicators continued to be stable, with heroin representing only 4.3 percent of primary treatment admissions. Ethnographic reports from local heroin users reported an increase in the availability of Mexican heroin in Atlanta. Users indicated minimal difference between the purity levels of South American and Mexican heroin available at the retail level. Results from the 2011 Domestic Monitor Program (DMP) report on heroin use in Atlanta documented an increase in purity in Mexican heroin. Drug reports for heroin among drug items analyzed in NFLIS laboratories increased from 328 in 2011 to 512 in 2012.

Prescription Drugs

In 2012, multiple drug indicators (treatment admissions data, NFLIS reports, and State ME data) suggested that oxycodone was the most reported prescription drug used in the Atlanta area. Treatment admissions data demonstrated that oxycodone use has stabilized over the last 2 years (2.8 percent in 2011 and 3.0 percent in 2012) after increasing consistently from 2007 through 2011. State ME data also showed a slight decrease in oxycodone postmortem result entries. NFLIS data indicated a small decrease in oxycodone reports among analyzed drug items from 2011 to 2012 (930 versus 863). Alprazolam, the most commonly reported benzodiazepine, displayed similar trends, with stable treatment admissions and a slight increase in drug reports among items analyzed by NFLIS laboratories from 2011 to 2012. The State ME's Office also reported a slight increase in deaths with alprazolam present. State ME data indicated an increase in the number of deaths

associated with hydrocodone, while NFLIS data showed an increase in drug reports among items analyzed from 2011 to 2012 (*n*=564 versus *n*=641).

MDMA

MDMA trends continued to be stable and accounted for a less than 0.1 percent of treatment admissions. State ME and NFLIS data also indicated a continued decrease in MDMA.

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