

INAUGURAL ISSUE: OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY DRUG EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

CDEWS News presents highlights from the findings of the Community Drug Early Warning System (CDEWS). This inaugural issue provides a brief overview of the project.

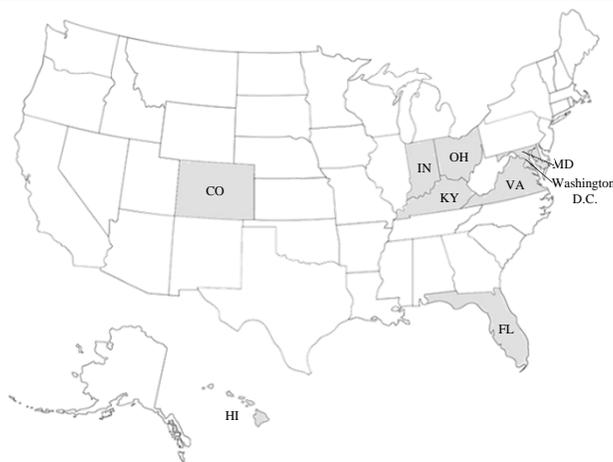
CDEWS is based on the national Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) program, launched in 1987, and its modified versions, the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring (ADAM) and ADAM II programs which ended in 2013. These programs sent researchers into booking facilities across the country to interview arrestees and obtain a voluntary urine specimen for analysis. An independent laboratory then tested the specimens for ten drugs (ADAM II). The results provided information about the drugs available and served as an early warning indicator of emerging drugs in the general community. CDEWS is designed to be a new, less costly and more rapid, drug surveillance system because it uses urine specimens already collected by existing drug testing programs.

CDEWS staff work with testing programs at criminal justice agencies and hospitals to obtain a sample of urine specimens that are ready to be discarded. These de-identified specimens are sent to the collaborating CDEWS laboratory to test each specimen for an expanded panel of over 150 licit and illicit drugs, including opioids, benzodiazepines, antidepressants, synthetic cannabinoids (SC), and other new psychoactive substances (NPS).

CDEWS staff periodically consult toxicologists around the world in order to update the test panel to include the newest emerging drugs. Pilot studies of the CDEWS methodology have now been completed in eight states and Washington, D.C. (see map).

By using already collected urine specimens, CDEWS can provide a relatively quick and inexpensive snapshot of the types of drugs recently used by participating populations. CDEWS provides an indication of drugs locally available, but is not designed to compute prevalence estimates of use and cannot determine if a person testing positive for a licit drug used it under a physician's supervision. CDEWS results have already proven useful for identifying the changing variety of SC being ingested, and for helping testing programs to update their testing protocols. A complete description of the CDEWS methodology is available in each study report. Subsequent issues of *CDEWS News* will highlight special analyses and selected findings from the full CDEWS reports.

Areas Where CDEWS Studies Have Been Completed, 2013-2017



CDEWS News and full reports are available at: <https://go.umd.edu/cdews-info>
