K53 National, Regional, and Local Patterns of Drugs Seized by Law Enforcement and Analyzed by Crime Laboratories in the United States: 2004 - 2007

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After attending this presentation, attendees will better understand the complexity and geographical variation of the U.S. drug problem and will also recognize the contributions of forensic laboratories and scientists not only to drug law enforcement issues but also to providing key scientific data for drug policy initiatives. This presentation will focus on the "supply side" of the drug problem by addressing the issue of the distinct drugs seized by law enforcement agencies and analyzed by over 275 of our nation's crime laboratories.

The presentation will impact the forensic community by acknowledging the large contribution of crime laboratory forensic scientists. The presentation will also contribute to a clearer understanding of varying dimensions and components of drug trafficking and abuse of both licit and illicit drugs.

Our nation's drug problem consists of patterns of trafficking, consumption, and diversion of both licit controlled drugs and illicit drugs that vary across time and location. Data from DEA's National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) will be presented to depict key issues concerning national, regional and local drug problems. State and local forensic laboratories analyze substances secured in law enforcement operations across the country and offer a valuable resource for monitoring and understanding drug abuse and trafficking, including

the diversion of legally manufactured drugs into illegal markets. During the period January 2004 through December 2007, an estimated 7,227,531 drug items were analyzed by state and local laboratories in the United States. The number and percentage of the top five controlled prescription drugs and the top four illegal drugs analyzed during 2004- 2007 will be presented at national and regional levels (see table below). The distribution of these drugs across state and metropolitan areas will also be examined.

	National		West Region		Midwest Region		NE Region		South Region	
Illegal Drugs	*Number*	*%**	*Number*	*%**	*Number*	*%**	*Number*	*%**	*Number*	*%**
Cocaine	2,363,308	32.70	283,498	20.32	453,621	25.93	464,081	37.85	1,162,108	39.78
Cannabis/THC	2,371,585	32.81	324,365	23.25	792,232	45.03	367,070	29.93	887,915	30.39
Methamphetamine	848,495	11.74	512,157	36.71	122,488	7.27	6,127	0.50	207,723	7.11
Heroin	372,141	5.15	49,342	3.54	82,095	4.87	128,437	10.47	112,265	3.84
Prescription Drugs	*Number*	*%**	*Number*	*%**	*Number*	*%**	*Number*	*%**	*Number*	*%**
Hydrocodone	109,440	1.51	11,518	0.83	17,931	1.06	13,819	1.13	66,176	2.27
Alprazolam	108,734	1.50	**	**	21,124	1.25	14,746	1.20	66,791	2.29
Oxycodone	92,764	1.28	10,886	0.78	18,393	1.09	27,566	2.25	35,919	1.23
Methadone	33,882	0.47	4,767	0.34	5,355	0.32	8,564	0.70	15,197	0.52
Clonazepam	29,426	0.41	2,872	0.21	6,489	0.39	8,601	0.70	11,464	0.39

* Percent columns represent percent of estimated total drug items analyzed in the period January 2004 - December 2007

** Estimates for this drug do not meet standards of precision & reliability - too few laboratories reported this specific drug

Highlighted findings will include the prevalence of drugs seized and analyzed with special emphasis on controlled drugs such as opioid analgesics and benzodiazepines. Geographic Information System (GIS) generated maps will be used to display levels of seized drugs identified based on the "county of seizure" for a representative state from each of the census regions. The distribution of major drug categories across states as well as drugs identified in strategic locations will also be presented. The integration of GIS functionality for data exploration and display further enhances the importance of the NFLIS data as an informational resource for drug policy and drug control agencies by providing timely information on drug

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trafficking and abuse spatial patterns across the United States.

Drug Seizures, Drug Database, Geographic Information System (GIS) Display

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