



### Quarterly findings

Results presented in this report are for 129,423 individual solid dosage drug items analyzed by 14 State lab systems and 18 local labs between July 1 and September 30, 2000.<sup>1</sup> Nearly 299 substances were identified among the analyzed items submitted by all reporting labs. Because only two State systems in the West and two State systems in the Northeast have begun to report regularly, the South and Midwest regions are disproportionately represented.

This report begins with findings on drugs of particular interest to drug control and law enforcement agencies, providing specific results for emerging drugs of interest, club drugs, analgesics, and anabolic steroids. Overall, cannabis/THC, cocaine, mathamphetamine, and heroin accounted for nearly 88% of the items analyzed. A more

detailed summary of these findings begins on page 6.

### Selected drugs of interest

NFLIS captures the results of all drugs identified and reported by the participating labs. The database, therefore, provides a window into the prevalence of emerging and other drugs of interest to the drug control community and of drugs that are rarely encountered. Drugs such as hydrocodone, ketamine, and gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB) can be traced by their frequency of appearance in labs across the country.

Exhibit 1 provides an example of the potential power of the NFLIS database to highlight emerging trends in infrequently

found—but potentially important—drugs. The table shows the number of times a selected drug of interest was identified by the reporting labs. For example, MDMA was identified 808 times, while ketamine and GHB were identified 142 and 46 times, respectively.

*(continued on page 3)*

<sup>1</sup> Results were received for 134,331 items, including 4,908 for which the result was "No Analysis"; these items were excluded from the analyses reported in this report. Additionally, some items may include multiple substances: 1,093 items included results for two substances; 73 items for three. Unless otherwise specified, the results reported here are for the first substance identified in an item.

#### About the System

Approximately 300 State and local forensic labs in the United States perform several million solid dosage drug analyses each year. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the drug control community have long recognized that these analyses represent a wealth of information. The National Forensic Laboratory Information System (NFLIS) is a DEA-sponsored undertaking to systematically accumulate results from these drug analyses into a centralized data system. The NFLIS data system will provide the basis for developing information for local, State, regional, and national drug control and enforcement efforts. NFLIS also will assist the DEA in accomplishing its mission as our Nation's leading drug control agency.

*For more details, please see page 2.*

### Exhibit 1 Selected drugs of interest, by census region

Number of analytic results<sup>a</sup>

| Drug                                 | Census Region |     |    |                | Total          |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|-----|----|----------------|----------------|
|                                      | W             | MW  | NE | S <sup>b</sup> |                |
| Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) | 66            | 240 | 66 | 436            | <b>808</b>     |
| Hydrocodone                          | 87            | 83  | 21 | 497            | <b>688</b>     |
| Ketamine                             | 13            | 58  | 16 | 55             | <b>142</b>     |
| Methylphenidate (Ritalin)            | 2             | 55  | 1  | 66             | <b>124</b>     |
| Carisoprodol                         | 7             | 19  | 0  | 73             | <b>99</b>      |
| Methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA)      | 2             | 57  | 9  | 24             | <b>92</b>      |
| Gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB)          | 3             | 19  | 0  | 24             | <b>46</b>      |
| Tramadol                             | 0             | 7   | 0  | 11             | <b>18</b>      |
| Paramethoxyamphetamine (PMA)         | 0             | 4   | 0  | 0              | <b>4</b>       |
| Lysergic acid                        | 1             | 0   | 0  | 0              | <b>1</b>       |
| <b>Subtotal selected drugs</b>       |               |     |    |                | <b>2,022</b>   |
| <b>Total analyzed items</b>          |               |     |    |                | <b>129,423</b> |

<sup>a</sup>Includes up to three substances per item.

<sup>b</sup>Results for Texas State labs are for the period June 1 - August 31, 2000.

# Behind the data

The Research Triangle Institute (RTI), under contract to the DEA, began the planning, design, and implementation of NFLIS in September 1997. A survey of 308 State and local forensic labs conducted in mid-1998 identified 276 individual labs that routinely perform solid dosage drug analyses.\* Results from the survey and information from other sources were used to establish a sampling frame to identify the State lab systems and local labs that make up the NFLIS sample.

Thirty-one State lab systems and 31 local labs were sampled for NFLIS. These State systems and local labs include 165 individual labs that analyzed more than 1 million items in 1997. Some labs were considered to be important for strategic reasons, such as geographic location or caseload size, and were included in the sample with certainty. Other labs were randomly selected to generate a sample that will be used to make national and regional estimates. Geographic region, type of lab (State lab system or local lab), and estimated annual drug caseload were used in establishing the sample and sample weights.

Enlistment of labs for NFLIS began in 1998, and efforts to secure participation agreements (memoranda of understanding) are ongoing. The DEA and RTI provide

modest assistance to labs to facilitate their participation in NFLIS. This assistance includes computer hardware and software as well as the design and implementation of basic lab information management systems (LIMS) for use in establishing automated drug analysis databases.

As of November 1, 2000, 41 of the 62 sampled State lab systems and local labs (a total of 115 individual labs) have signed formal agreements to participate in NFLIS. Of the remaining sampled labs, some are in the process of upgrading their LIMS or require another specific data entry system to facilitate their reporting to NFLIS.

In addition to the sampled labs, other labs have volunteered to contribute data to NFLIS. To date, six non-sampled labs have agreed to participate. Because these labs are not part of the NFLIS sample, their data will not be used to generate the national and regional estimates. However, these labs represent an initial step toward the ultimate goal of including data for all State and local forensic labs that conduct solid dosage drug analyses. In some cases, these additional participants will provide NFLIS with the results of all drug analyses conducted in some States, adding to the ability of the system to report on drug analyses at the State and local levels. Data from these additional participants will be included in NFLIS analyses and reports, as appropriate.

The following table presents an

overview of the anticipated and current coverage of NFLIS. As shown, 32 of the State lab systems and local labs (together totaling 89 individual labs) that have joined NFLIS have begun to regularly report their drug analysis data to the System. These reporting labs represent an annual caseload of more than 450,000. Once a sufficient number of sampled labs is reporting regularly, statistically representative national estimates will be generated and reported.

The core NFLIS data elements include lab case number (or other identifier), submission number, lab item/exhibit number, date case received, location of submitting agency, form of item/exhibit (e.g., powder), total quantity of item/exhibit, date case was completed or reported, and substance(s) identified. Optional NFLIS data elements include name of submitting agency, submitting agency case number, how the evidence was acquired (e.g., seized/purchased), origin of drug (legal or illegal manufacturer), name of legal manufacturer, unique packaging and markings, drug purity, secondary active drugs (adulterants) or diluents, and non-controlled substance(s) identified. As the data are reported to NFLIS, they are recoded and reformatted into a standard format, validated and edited as necessary, and stored in a database.

\* 1998 Survey of State and Local Forensic Laboratories, Research Triangle Institute, August 1999.

## Planned and current NFLIS coverage, by census region

|                             | West |                       | Midwest |          | Northeast |          | South |          | Total           |          |
|-----------------------------|------|-----------------------|---------|----------|-----------|----------|-------|----------|-----------------|----------|
|                             | No.  | Caseload <sup>a</sup> | No.     | Caseload | No.       | Caseload | No.   | Caseload | No.             | Caseload |
| <b>State Lab Systems</b>    |      |                       |         |          |           |          |       |          |                 |          |
| Sampling Frame <sup>b</sup> | 10   | 99,300                | 13      | 169,300  | 10        | 104,300  | 16    | 355,200  | 49              | 728,100  |
| Sample <sup>c</sup>         | 6    | 85,500                | 6       | 153,972  | 6         | 98,588   | 13    | 331,201  | 31              | 669,261  |
| Enlisted <sup>d</sup>       |      |                       |         |          |           |          |       |          |                 |          |
| Sampled                     | 3    | 50,900                | 4       | 122,957  | 3         | 41,033   | 10    | 258,236  | 20 <sup>f</sup> | 473,126  |
| Non-Sampled                 | 1    | 1,700                 | 0       | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0     | 0        | 1               | 1,700    |
| Reporting <sup>e</sup>      |      |                       |         |          |           |          |       |          |                 |          |
| Sampled                     | 2    | 48,000                | 4       | 122,957  | 2         | 27,033   | 6     | 124,180  | 14 <sup>g</sup> | 322,170  |
| Non-Sampled                 | 0    | 0                     | 0       | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0     | 0        | 0               | 0        |
| <b>Local Labs</b>           |      |                       |         |          |           |          |       |          |                 |          |
| Sampling Frame <sup>b</sup> | 34   | 152,800               | 31      | 120,300  | 19        | 216,300  | 32    | 163,900  | 116             | 653,300  |
| Sample <sup>c</sup>         | 9    | 85,567                | 7       | 87,853   | 6         | 172,031  | 9     | 53,872   | 31              | 399,323  |
| Enlisted <sup>d</sup>       |      |                       |         |          |           |          |       |          |                 |          |
| Sampled                     | 5    | 36,735                | 4       | 19,580   | 5         | 87,488   | 7     | 68,846   | 21              | 212,649  |
| Non-Sampled                 | 0    | 0                     | 0       | 0        | 2         | 15,650   | 3     | 11,377   | 5               | 27,027   |
| Reporting <sup>e</sup>      |      |                       |         |          |           |          |       |          |                 |          |
| Sampled                     | 3    | 20,641                | 4       | 19,580   | 4         | 27,488   | 5     | 47,401   | 16              | 115,110  |
| Non-Sampled                 | 0    | 0                     | 0       | 0        | 2         | 15,650   | 0     | 0        | 2               | 15,650   |

<sup>a</sup> Estimated 1997 caseloads derived from the 1998 Survey of State and Local Forensic Laboratories, Research Triangle Institute, August 1999.

<sup>b</sup> Total number of identified State lab systems and local labs that perform solid dosage drug analyses.

<sup>c</sup> A statistical sample of State lab systems and local labs that will allow for regional and national estimates of drug analyses results.

<sup>d</sup> Sampled and non-sampled State lab systems and local labs that have signed memoranda of understanding agreeing to regularly contribute data to NFLIS, as of November 1, 2000.

<sup>e</sup> Sampled and non-sampled State lab systems and local labs that submitted data for at least part of the third quarter of 2000.

<sup>f</sup> These enlisted State lab systems represent 94 individual labs.

<sup>g</sup> These reporting State lab systems represent 71 individual labs.

## Quarterly findings

(continued from page 1)

Exhibits 2 through 4 present results of analyzed items for three different categories of drugs: club/party drugs, analgesics, and steroids.

Exhibit 2a presents selected "club drug" items analyzed for this quarter. The term

"club drugs" refers to drugs that are increasingly being used by young adults at all-night dance parties known as "raves," dance clubs, and bars. Approximately 72% of the club drugs analyzed were MDMA. The use of MDMA is on the rise, as a recent study found that one out of 12 high school seniors has tried MDMA (Partnership Attitude Tracking Study

[PATS], 2000). Ketamine and MDA accounted for 13% and 8%, respectively, of the analyzed club drugs. Exhibit 2b presents the top four club drugs reported in each region. The South and Midwest regions had a greater frequency of MDA than the other regions while the South and Midwest regions also reported a greater frequency of GHB/GBL than the other regions.

### Exhibit 2a

## Frequency of club drugs

Number and percentage of total identified club drugs

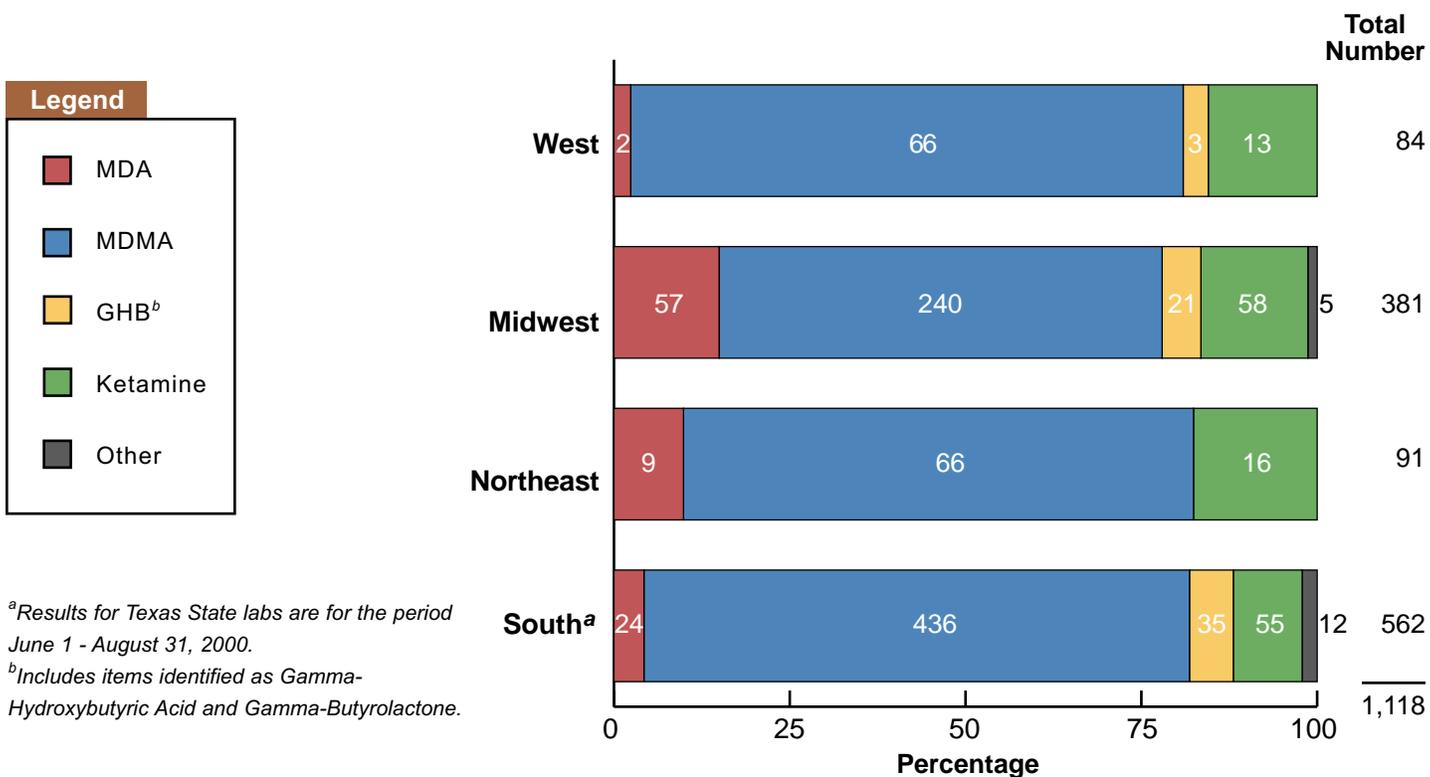
| Club Drug                                | Total <sup>a</sup> | Percentage  |
|--|--------------------|-------------|
| Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA)     | 808                | 72.2%       |
| Ketamine                                 | 142                | 12.8%       |
| Methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDA)          | 92                 | 8.2%        |
| Gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB) <sup>b</sup> | 59                 | 5.2%        |
| Flunitrazepam                            | 13                 | 1.2%        |
| Paramethoxyamphetamine (PMA)             | 4                  | 0.4%        |
| <b>Total club drugs</b>                  | <b>1,118</b>       | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>Total analyzed items</b>              | <b>129,423</b>     |             |

<sup>a</sup>Results for Texas State labs are for the period June 1 - August 31, 2000.

<sup>b</sup>Includes items identified as Gamma-Hydroxybutyric Acid and Gamma-Butyrolactone.

### Exhibit 2b

## Distribution of club drugs, by region



## Quarterly findings

(continued from page 3)

According to the 1999 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, non-medical use of prescription drugs is at its highest level since the survey began over 25 years ago. In 1998, an estimated 1.6 million Americans used prescription-type

pain relievers non-medically for the first time. This represents a significant increase since the 1980s, when there were generally fewer than 500,000 initiates per year.

Exhibit 3a summarizes common pain relievers reported in the data this quarter. Hydrocodone made up approximately 41% of the analyzed analgesics while oxy-

codone made up 34%. In addition, codeine and morphine made up 14% and 6%, respectively. Exhibit 3b presents the top 4 analgesics reported in each region. There were few regional differences. The West region had the least reported oxy-

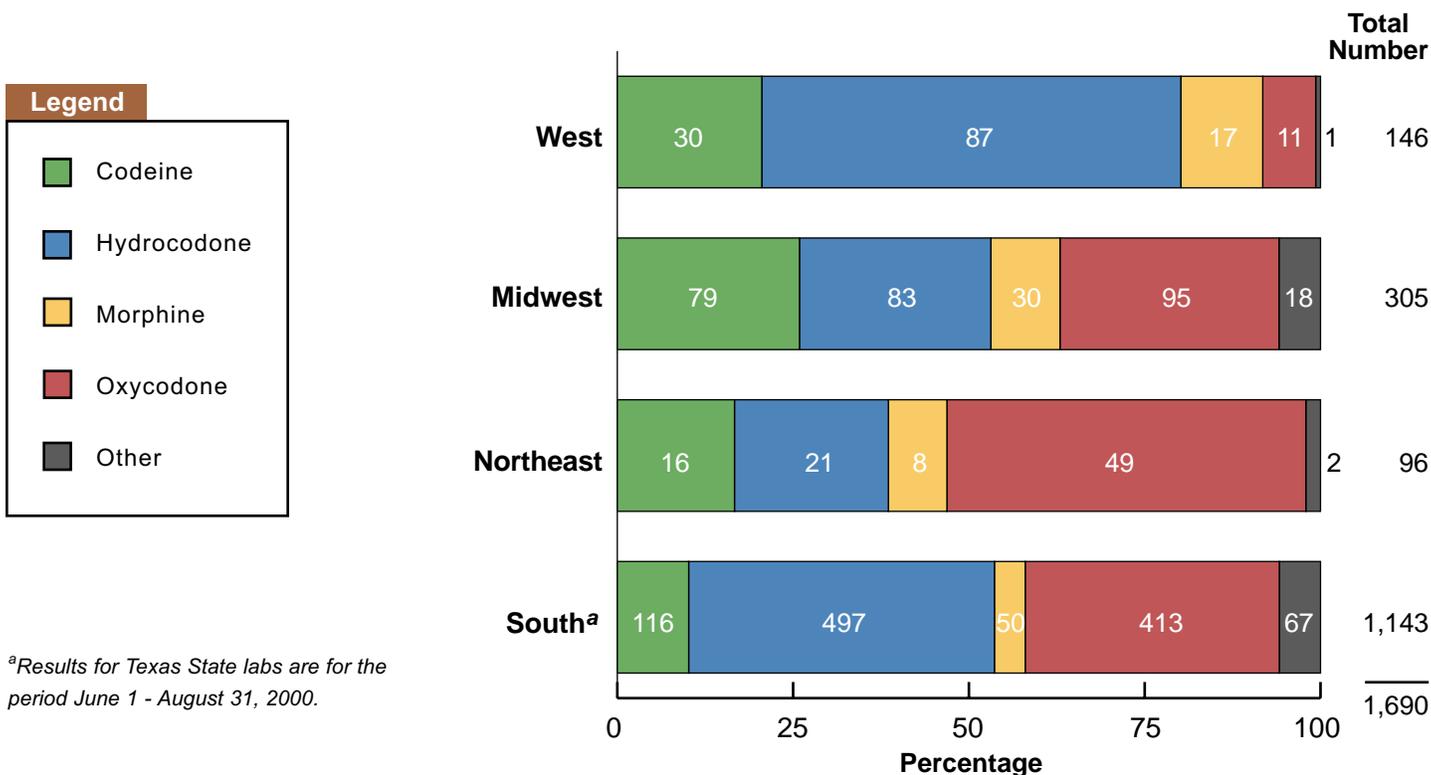
### Exhibit 3a Frequency of analgesics

Number and percentage of total identified analgesics

| Analgesic                   | Total <sup>a</sup> | Percentage  |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Hydrocodone                 | 688                | 40.7%       |
| Oxycodone                   | 568                | 33.7%       |
| Codeine                     | 241                | 14.2%       |
| Morphine                    | 105                | 6.2%        |
| Hydromorphone               | 48                 | 2.8%        |
| Meperidine                  | 35                 | 2.1%        |
| Fentanyl                    | 5                  | 0.3%        |
| <b>Total analgesics</b>     | <b>1,690</b>       | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>Total analyzed items</b> | <b>129,423</b>     |             |

<sup>a</sup>Results for Texas State labs are for the period June 1 - August 31, 2000.

### Exhibit 3b Distribution of analgesics, by region<sup>a</sup>



## Quarterly findings

(continued from page 4)

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), anabolic steroid abuse is increasing among adolescents, most rapidly among females (NIDA Community Drug Alert Bulletin, 2000). Findings from a national survey (1999 NIDA Monitoring the Future Study) of mid-

dle school and high school students indicate a 50% increase in steroid use since 1991. As shown in Exhibit 4a, approximately 222 of the analyzed items for this quarter were a type of anabolic steroid. Testosterone made up about 59% of the steroids presented. Methandrostenolone and Nandrolone made up 14% and 13%, respectively, of the steroids analyzed. Exhibit 4b shows the top four steroids

reported in each region. There were few regional differences in steroid reports, as many of the steroids had less than 2 reports in each region. The South had the greatest frequency of testosterone compared to other regions.

(continued on page 6)

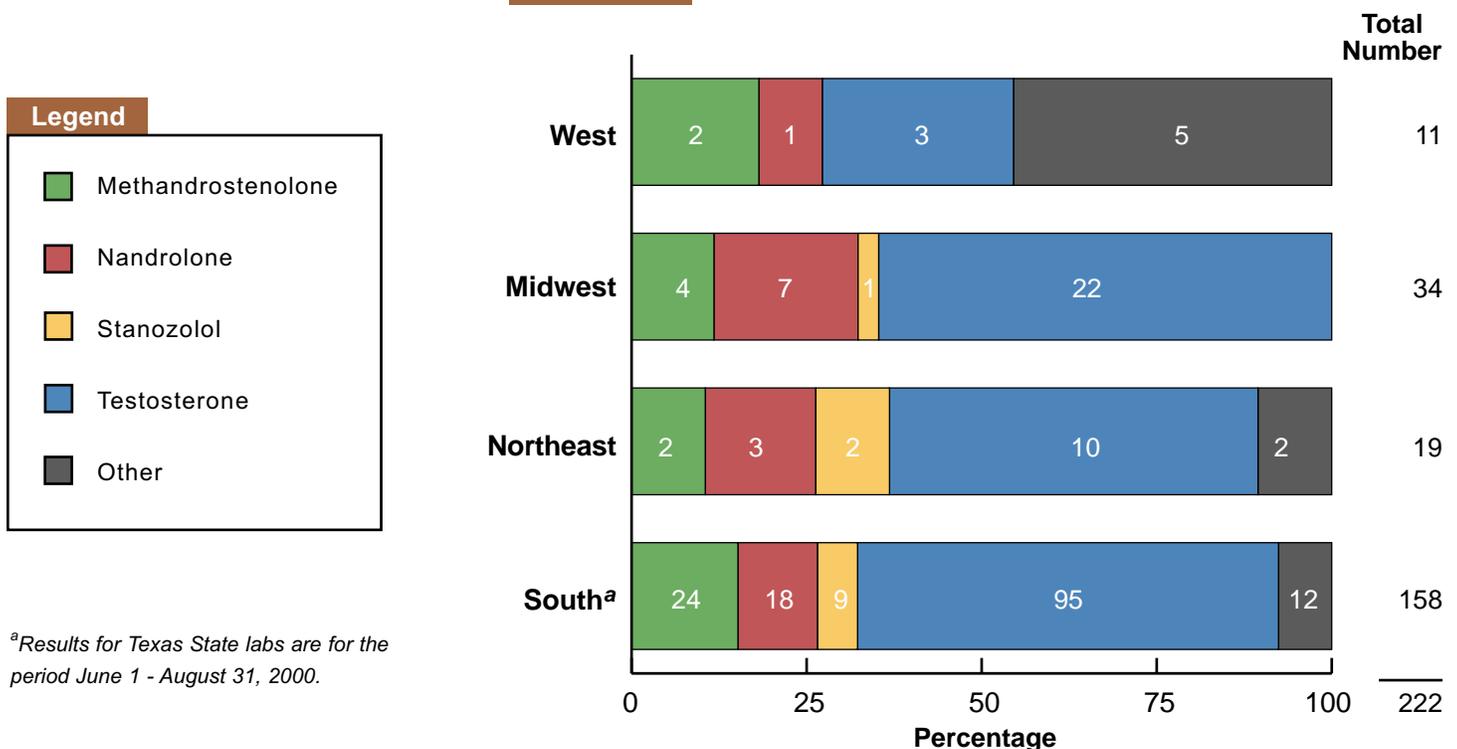
### Exhibit 4a Frequency of anabolic steroids

Number and percentage of total identified anabolic steroids

| Steroid                        | Total <sup>a</sup> | Percentage  |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Boldenone                      | 7                  | 3.1%        |
| Fluoxymesterone                | 5                  | 2.2%        |
| Mesterolone                    | 2                  | 0.9%        |
| Methandrostenolone             | 32                 | 14.3%       |
| Methenolone                    | 1                  | 0.4%        |
| Methyltestosterone             | 1                  | 0.4%        |
| Nandrolone                     | 29                 | 13.0%       |
| Oxandrolone                    | 1                  | 0.4%        |
| Oxymetholone                   | 2                  | 0.9%        |
| Stanozolol                     | 12                 | 5.4%        |
| Testosterone                   | 130                | 59.0%       |
| <b>Total anabolic steroids</b> | <b>222</b>         | <b>100%</b> |
| <b>Total analyzed items</b>    | <b>129,423</b>     |             |

<sup>a</sup>Results for Texas State labs are for the period June 1 - August 31, 2000.

### Exhibit 4b Distribution of anabolic steroids, by region



## Quarterly findings

### Summary of results

The 25 most frequently identified substances are listed in Exhibit 5a. As shown, the top four drugs presented in Exhibit 5b make up almost 88% of these results. A variety of other illegal substances is shown in Exhibit 5a, but none of these substances represents more than 1% of the total number of analyzed items.

Drugs representing three categories of interest to enforcement agencies are also included in the "Top 25." Testosterone is one of a number of anabolic steroids identified; a variety of others was also reported as shown in Exhibit 4a. Four prescription analgesics—hydrocodone, oxycodone, codeine, and morphine—are among the top 25 drugs reported (see also Exhibit 3a). MDMA, less than 1% of all reported results, was one of several "club" drugs identified (see also Exhibit 2a).

Exhibit 5b presents the top four most frequently identified drugs by census region.

Cannabis/THC and cocaine dominate the results, although there are regional differences. Overall, 40% of the analyzed items were identified as cannabis/THC and approximately 30% as cocaine (including "crack" cocaine). Items identified as heroin constituted 8% of the sample, and approximately 10% of the items were identified as methamphetamine.

## Exhibit 5a

### 25 Most frequently identified drugs

Number and percentage of total analyzed items

| Drug <sup>a</sup>                    | Number <sup>b</sup> | Percentage    |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Cannabis/THC                         | 51,601              | 39.87%        |
| Cocaine                              | 39,094              | 30.21%        |
| Methamphetamine                      | 12,849              | 9.93%         |
| Heroin                               | 10,240              | 7.91%         |
| Non-controlled, non-narcotic drugs   | 1,198               | 0.93%         |
| Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) | 808                 | 0.62%         |
| Alprazolam                           | 744                 | 0.57%         |
| Hydrocodone                          | 688                 | 0.53%         |
| Diazepam                             | 601                 | 0.46%         |
| Oxycodone                            | 568                 | 0.44%         |
| Phencyclidine                        | 433                 | 0.33%         |
| Pseudoephedrine                      | 386                 | 0.30%         |
| Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD)     | 301                 | 0.23%         |
| Clonazepam                           | 268                 | 0.21%         |
| Acetaminophen                        | 263                 | 0.20%         |
| Amphetamine                          | 254                 | 0.20%         |
| Codeine                              | 241                 | 0.19%         |
| Psilocin                             | 197                 | 0.15%         |
| Propoxyphene                         | 143                 | 0.11%         |
| Ketamine                             | 142                 | 0.11%         |
| Testosterone                         | 130                 | 0.10%         |
| Methylphenidate                      | 124                 | 0.10%         |
| Ephedrine                            | 118                 | 0.09%         |
| Morphine                             | 105                 | 0.08%         |
| Carisoprodol                         | 99                  | 0.08%         |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>121,595</b>      | <b>93.95%</b> |
| <b>Total analyzed items</b>          | <b>129,423</b>      |               |

<sup>a</sup>Some of the substances listed include more than one variant of a drug.

<sup>b</sup>Results for Texas State labs are for the period June 1 - August 31, 2000.

## Legend

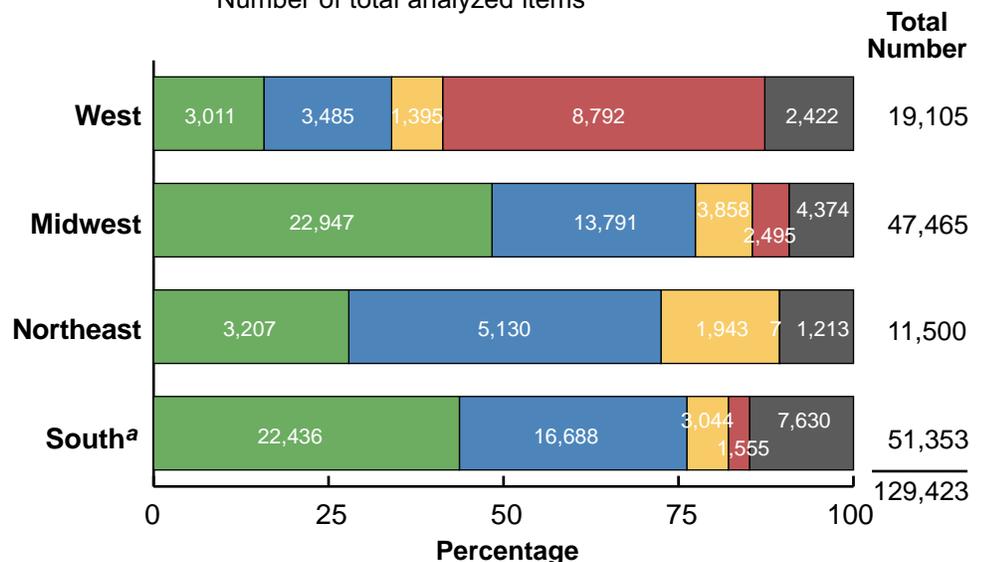
- Cannabis
- Cocaine
- Heroin
- Methamphetamine
- Other

<sup>a</sup>Results for Texas State labs are for the period June 1 - August 31, 2000.

## Exhibit 5b

### Distribution of drug results, by region

Number of total analyzed items



## Quarterly findings

(continued from page 6)

There was some regional variation among the reporting labs, although the labs are not necessarily representative of their regions. For this quarter, cannabis/ THC is the most prevalent substance identified in the Midwest and South, while cocaine is the most prevalent drug identified by the reporting labs in the Northeast. In addition, methamphetamine was reported more frequently by the Western labs than by the labs from other regions. And finally, the prevalence of heroin among these reported results also varies substantially—from about 6% in the Southern results to nearly 17% of the results for the Northeastern labs. These findings are consistent with the results from the last quarter.

Exhibit 6 summarizes analysis results reported to NFLIS broken down by nine drug categories. Drugs and other sub-

stances were classified by the System to Retrieve Information from Drug Evidence (STRIDE) codes.<sup>2</sup> Originally, these classifications were combined to form eight categories of drugs. Since the last quarterly report, heroin has been taken out of the narcotics category and created as a separate category. Cannabis/THC and cocaine made up 40% and 30%, respectively, of the items analyzed. Approximately 10% of the items were stimulants and 8% were identified as heroin. Depressants and tranquilizers, hallucinogens, and other drugs totaled about 6%, and no drug was identified in 4% of the items.

<sup>2</sup>STRIDE data report the results of analyses of drugs by DEA labs. Therefore, STRIDE data reflect mostly Federal—as opposed to State and local—enforcement activity.

## Drug combinations

For the majority of analyzed items, only one drug or substance was identified. In 1,093 analyzed items, two different substances were identified. While many combinations occurred only once, four represented 51% of all of the combinations. The most common combinations and their percentages of all combinations were:

- Cocaine (either powder or "crack") and heroin, 26.3%
- Cocaine and crack cocaine, 6.8%
- Amphetamine and methamphetamine, 4.6%
- Cocaine (either powder or "crack") and cannabis, 12.9%

### Exhibit 6 Frequency of analyzed items, by census region and drug category

Number and percentage of total analyzed items

| Drug Category                      | Census Region            |                          |                          |                          | Total                      |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
|                                    | West                     | Midwest                  | Northeast                | South <sup>a</sup>       |                            |
| <b>Cannabis/THC<sup>b</sup></b>    | 3,011<br>(15.76%)        | 22,947<br>(48.35%)       | 3,207<br>(27.89%)        | 22,436<br>(43.69%)       | <b>51,601<br/>(39.87%)</b> |
| <b>Cocaine</b>                     | 3,485<br>(18.24%)        | 13,791<br>(29.06%)       | 5,130<br>(44.61%)        | 16,688<br>(32.50%)       | <b>39,094<br/>(30.21%)</b> |
| <b>Stimulants</b>                  | 8,850<br>(46.32%)        | 2,695<br>(5.68%)         | 33<br>(0.29%)            | 1,816<br>(3.54%)         | <b>13,394<br/>(10.35%)</b> |
| <b>Heroin</b>                      | 1,395<br>(7.30%)         | 3,858<br>(8.13%)         | 1,943<br>(16.90%)        | 3,044<br>(5.93%)         | <b>10,240<br/>(7.91%)</b>  |
| <b>No substance identified</b>     | 1,186<br>(6.21%)         | 1,087<br>(2.29%)         | 148<br>(1.29%)           | 2,951<br>(5.75%)         | <b>5,372<br/>(4.15%)</b>   |
| <b>Other substances</b>            | 745<br>(3.90%)           | 1,543<br>(3.25%)         | 642<br>(5.58%)           | 1,265<br>(2.46%)         | <b>4,195<br/>(3.24%)</b>   |
| <b>Narcotics other than heroin</b> | 160<br>(0.84%)           | 475<br>(1.00%)           | 112<br>(0.97%)           | 1,287<br>(2.51%)         | <b>2,034<br/>(1.57%)</b>   |
| <b>Depressants/Tranquilizers</b>   | 78<br>(0.41%)            | 441<br>(0.93%)           | 186<br>(1.62%)           | 1,143<br>(2.23%)         | <b>1,848<br/>(1.43%)</b>   |
| <b>Hallucinogens</b>               | 195<br>(1.02%)           | 628<br>(1.32%)           | 99<br>(0.86%)            | 723<br>(1.41%)           | <b>1,645<br/>(1.27%)</b>   |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>19,105<br/>(100%)</b> | <b>47,465<br/>(100%)</b> | <b>11,500<br/>(100%)</b> | <b>51,353<br/>(100%)</b> | <b>129,423<br/>(100%)</b>  |

<sup>a</sup>Results for Texas State labs are for the period June 1 - August 31, 2000.

<sup>b</sup>Includes items identified as "Cannabis with Phencyclidine (PCP)."

# NFLIS Interactive Data Site Access

In January 2001, the NFLIS Interactive Data Site (IDS) will be available to all labs participating in NFLIS. The IDS allows participating labs to run parameterized queries against the NFLIS database. These queries allow labs to access their own data at the individual case level and provide aggregated regional and national data. Labs that participate in NFLIS but have not begun sending in data files will only be able to run queries to get regional and national statistics.

The IDS is implemented as a secure web site located on a restricted and secured dedicated server that is accessible only through a direct dial-in connection. RTI staff provide a toll-free number for participating labs to use. The IDS is not accessible from the Internet. To access it, lab staff must

dial in to the NFLIS server directly and then use either Netscape or Internet Explorer to view the IDS. Each participating lab will be given a lab-specific username and password as well as detailed instructions as to how to use the IDS. Labs will not have access to other labs' data except as aggregated regional and national statistics. The multiple labs within a State system, such as the Illinois State Police labs, will have access to each other's data consistent with policies set by the headquarters lab.

The data site provides the capacity to query the data using standard, parameterized queries that generate customized reports. Lab staff can specify the time period, region of interest, types of labs, types of drugs, etc. to customize these queries. For example, Exhibit 7 is a screen shot of an IDS

query that can be used to generate a table of the 25 most frequently identified drugs, similar to Exhibit 2 (shown earlier in this report).<sup>3</sup>

The IDS is continually being improved. The IDS is ready for labs to use, but NFLIS will be adding new queries and other features, as well as generally improving the IDS, over the next few months. Participating labs are encouraged to submit suggestions for improvement by using the feedback page in the IDS, by sending an e-mail to NFLIS@rti.org, or by calling Al Bethke at 919-485-7737.

<sup>3</sup>Data for Exhibit 2 in this report will not match comparable data that are run using the IDS because the database has expanded since the report was prepared and because special arrangements were made for the data used in the report for one State system.

## Exhibit 7

### A parameterized IDS query

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "National Forensic Laboratory Information System - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by RTI". The browser's address bar is empty. The main content area displays a form titled "25 Most Frequently Identified Drugs".

At the top of the form is a button labeled "Show Me Detailed Instructions". Below this is a section titled "1. Specify Time Period" with two columns of date selection:

|   | Start Date | End Date       |
|---|------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Submission Date            | July 2000  | September 2000 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completion Date | July 2000  | September 2000 |

Below this is a section titled "2. Select Labs by Type and Region" with two options: "OR Select Your Own Lab" and "CA San Bernardino S.". Under "Select Labs by Type and Region", there are radio buttons for "State Labs", "Local/Regional Labs", and "Both Types of Labs" (which is selected). Under "Select Your Own Lab", there is a radio button for "CA San Bernardino S.". Below these are radio buttons for "Northeast", "Midwest", "South", "West", and "All Regions" (which is selected).

At the bottom of the form is a button labeled "3. Run the Query".

On the left side of the browser window, there is a navigation menu with the following links: "Home", "Database Characteristics", "25 Most Frequently Identified Drugs", "Drug Categories", "DEA Drugs of Interest", "Specific Drug Counts", "Select Data Records", and "Feedback".

# Benefits & Limitations of NFLIS data

## Benefits

NFLIS will provide a key national-level source of "supply side" drug data. As such, it will provide information on the frequency with which illegal and controlled drugs and other substances are encountered by State and local law enforcement and analyzed by the Nation's forensic labs.

The systematic collection and analysis of solid dosage drug analysis data from State and local labs will improve our knowledge and understanding of the changes and trends in the Nation's drug problem. Additionally, it will be a major resource for supporting drug enforcement and drug policy initiatives at the national level and in communities throughout the country. NFLIS will assist the drug control community in achieving its mission by:

- highlighting variations of controlled substances across geographic areas and over time,
- improving access to recent estimates of drug availability by local, State, and national agencies,
- bringing attention to emerging drug problems, and
- providing current information about the diversion of licit drugs into illicit channels.

The DEA, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), and other Federal agencies will be served by the NFLIS database. The data will benefit State, regional, and local task forces and single agency operations as well.

NFLIS is an opportunity for State and local labs and their staff to participate in an important effort that will have high national visibility. Participating labs will receive regular reports summarizing data from their specific lab, as well as regional and national data. Additionally, participating labs will have access to the NFLIS database that will provide important information about local, regional, and national trends in drug seizures, purchases, and recoveries by law enforcement agencies and in drug analysis results. Participating labs will be able to run specific and customized queries on their own data as well as on aggregated data from other reporting labs. Labs will be able to use NFLIS data to plan and manage future workloads and needs.

## Limitations

As with all database systems, NFLIS has limitations that should be kept in mind when interpreting the findings presented in this report:

- NFLIS includes results from completed lab analyses only. Evidence secured by law enforcement but not analyzed is not included.
- Lab policies and procedures with respect to the handling of drug evidence vary. Some labs analyze all evidence, while others analyze selected items. For example, a lab may analyze only the items that are likely to contain substances associated with higher legal penalties (e.g., cocaine versus marijuana).

- Lab policies and procedures vary with respect to record keeping. Therefore, what is reported to NFLIS also varies. For example, some labs' automated records include the weight of the sample selected for analysis (e.g., one of five bags of powder), while others record total weight.

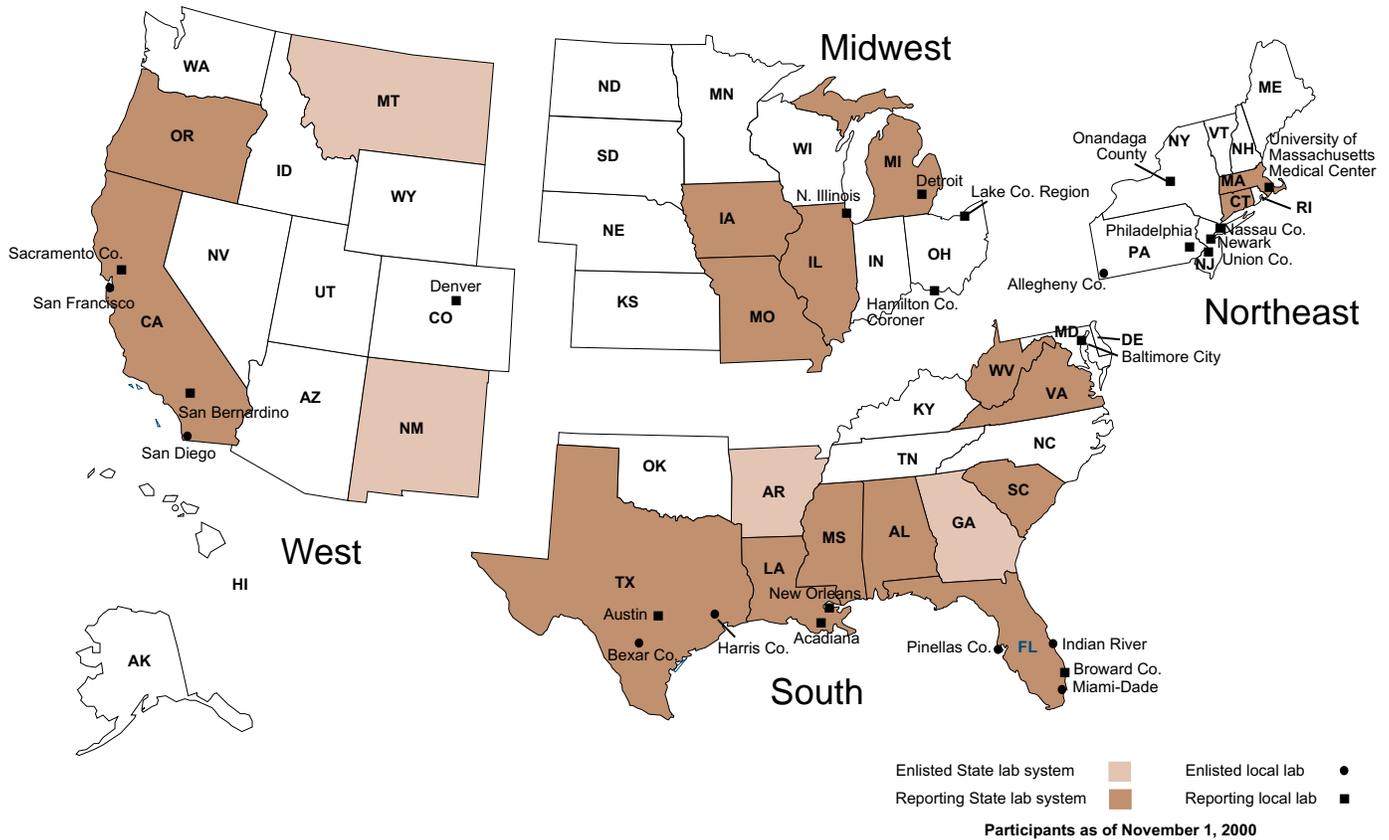
- Chemical analysis practices differ among labs. For example, an unusual substance may be explicitly identified by one lab, while another lab may indicate "no drug found." Although these differences in practice are unlikely to affect findings for common drugs such as cocaine or methamphetamine, they may affect the reported prevalence of unusual or emerging substances such as GHB, ketamine, or other drugs of interest.

- Currently, NFLIS includes only State and local labs. Drug analyses conducted by Federal forensic labs are not included.

- Evidence submitted for analysis reflects not only the "drugs on the street" but also local law enforcement practices that target specific types of drug trafficking.

In the coming months, RTI, with DEA support, plans to conduct special studies that will increase our understanding of these limitations. Information from these studies will enhance our ability to link the reported analytic findings with the true scope of the Nation's illegal and illicit drug markets.

## Participating labs, by census region



As of November 1, 2000, 21 State lab systems (95 individual labs) and 26 local labs have joined the NFLIS partnership; that is, they have agreed to regularly report solid dosage drug analysis data to the System. This Quarterly Report summarizes data for the period of July 1 to September 30, 2000, analyzed by 14 State lab systems (70 individual labs) and 18 local labs and submitted to RTI. (Texas State

system data are for the period June 1 to August 31, 2000.) Participating State lab systems and local labs are identified in the above map.

The State lab systems and local labs that have begun regular NFLIS reporting do not necessarily reflect their respective regions or the Nation. Although the data presented in this report represent all analyses submitted to NFLIS by the reporting labs for the

quarter as of November 1, 2000, extrapolation from these data to national or regional estimates is not currently possible. Statistically representative national and regional estimates of drug analysis results are expected to be available by early 2001, when a sufficient number of labs are regularly reporting their data.

This report was prepared under contract DEA-97-C-0059, Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice.

## Enlisted NFLIS State lab systems (sampled and non-sampled)

As of November 1, 2000

| State | State System Name  |
|-------|--|
| AL    | Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences (9 sites)  |
| AR    | Arkansas State Crime Laboratory (Little Rock)  |
| CA    | California Department of Justice Bureau of Forensic Services (10 sites)                        |
| CT    | Connecticut Department of Public Safety Controlled Substances/Toxicology Laboratory (Hartford) |
| FL    | Florida Department of Law Enforcement (7 sites)  |
| GA    | Georgia State Bureau of Investigation Forensic Sciences Division (7 sites)                     |
| IA    | Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation Laboratory (Des Moines)                                |
| IL    | Illinois State Police Division of Forensic Services (8 sites)                                  |
| LA    | Louisiana State Police Crime Laboratory (Baton Rouge)  |
| MA    | Massachusetts Department of Public Health Drug Analysis Laboratory (2 sites)                   |
| MA    | Massachusetts Department of State Police Crime Laboratory (Sudbury)                            |
| MI    | Michigan Department of State Police Forensic Science Division (7 sites)                        |
| MO    | Missouri State Highway Patrol Crime Laboratory Division (6 sites)                              |
| MS    | Mississippi Department of Public Safety Crime Laboratory (4 sites)                             |
| MT    | Montana State Forensic Science Division Laboratory (1 site)                                    |
| NM    | New Mexico Department of Public Safety Crime Laboratory (2 sites)                              |
| OR    | Oregon State Police Forensic Services Division (8 sites)                                       |
| SC    | South Carolina Law Enforcement Division Crime Laboratory (Columbia)                            |
| TX    | Texas Department of Public Safety Crime Laboratory Service (13 sites)                          |
| VA    | Virginia Division of Forensic Sciences (4 sites)   |
| WV    | West Virginia State Police Forensic Laboratory (South Charleston)                              |

## Enlisted NFLIS local labs (sampled and non-sampled)

As of November 1, 2000

| State | Lab Name   |
|-------|--|
| CA    | Sacramento County Laboratory of Forensic Services (Sacramento)                             |
| CA    | San Bernardino Sheriff's Office (San Bernardino)   |
| CA    | San Diego Police Department Crime Laboratory (San Diego)                                   |
| CA    | San Francisco Police Department Crime Laboratory (San Francisco)                           |
| CO    | Denver Police Department Crime Laboratory Bureau (Denver)                                  |
| FL    | Broward County Sheriff's Crime Laboratory (Ft. Lauderdale)                                 |
| FL    | Regional Crime Laboratory at Indian River Community College (Ft. Pierce)                   |
| FL    | Miami-Dade Police Department Crime Laboratory Bureau (Miami)                               |
| FL    | Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory (Largo)  |
| IL    | Northern Illinois Police Crime Lab (Chicago)   |
| LA    | Acadiana Criminalistics Laboratory (New Iberia)  |
| LA    | New Orleans Department of Police Scientific Criminal Investigations Division (New Orleans) |
| MA    | University of Massachusetts Medical Center Drugs of Abuse Laboratory (Worcester)           |
| MD    | Baltimore City Police Crime Laboratory (Baltimore)   |
| MI    | Detroit Police Department Crime Laboratory (Detroit)                                       |
| NJ    | Newark Department of Police Forensic Laboratory (Newark)                                   |
| NJ    | Union County Prosecutor's Office Laboratory (Westfield)                                    |
| NY    | Nassau County Police Department Scientific Investigation Bureau (Mineola)                  |
| NY    | Onandaga County Center for Forensic Sciences (Syracuse)                                    |
| OH    | Hamilton County Coroner's Laboratory (Cincinnati)  |
| OH    | Lake County Regional Forensic Laboratory (Painesville)                                     |
| PA    | Allegheny County Division of Laboratories (Pittsburgh)                                     |
| PA    | Philadelphia Police Department Crime Laboratory (Philadelphia)                             |
| TX    | Austin Police Department Crime Laboratory (Austin)   |
| TX    | Bexar County Forensic Science Center Criminal Investigation Laboratory (San Antonio)       |
| TX    | Harris County Crime Laboratory (Houston)   |

## Contact us

*For more information on NFLIS or to become a participating lab, please use the following contact information.*

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