

# Introduction and Legislative History

Up-to-date information on the availability and prevalence of illegal drugs and the criminal, health, and social consequences of their use is vital to the implementation of the National Drug Control Strategy. Such information is also important for measuring the effectiveness of federal, state, and local drug control programs. The Office of National Drug Control Policy's (ONDCP) Advisory Committee on Research, Data, and Evaluation; Subcommittee on Data, Research, and Interagency Coordination (the Data Subcommittee) coordinates the development and analysis of drug control information in support of the Strategy. The Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 1998 defines ONDCP's reporting requirements to include "an assessment of current drug use (including inhalants) and availability, impact of drug use, and treatment availability." The legislation\* specifies that this assessment shall include the following:

- (i) estimates of drug prevalence and frequency of use as measured by national, State, and local surveys of illicit drug use and by other special studies of:
  - (I) casual and chronic drug use;
  - (II) high-risk populations, including school dropouts, the homeless and transient, arrestees, parolees, probationers, and juvenile delinquents; and
  - (III) drug use in the workplace and the productivity lost by such use;
- (ii) an assessment of the reduction of drug availability against an ascertained baseline, as measured by:
  - (I) the quantities of cocaine, heroin, marijuana, methamphetamine, and other drugs available for consumption in the United States;
  - (II) the amount of marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and precursor chemicals entering the United States;
  - (III) the number of hectares of marijuana, poppy, and coca cultivated and destroyed domestically and in other countries;
  - (IV) the number of metric tons of marijuana, heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine seized;
  - (V) the number of cocaine and methamphetamine processing laboratories destroyed domestically and in other countries;
  - (VI) changes in the price and purity of heroin and cocaine, changes in the price of methamphetamine, and changes in tetrahydrocannabinol level of marijuana;
  - (VII) the amount and type of controlled substances diverted from legitimate retail and wholesale sources; and

\*The text is quoted directly from PL 105-277.

- (VIII) the effectiveness of Federal technology programs at improving drug detection capabilities in interdiction, and at United States ports of entry;
- (iii) an assessment of the reduction of the consequences of drug use and availability, which shall include estimation of:
  - (IX) the burden drug users placed on hospital emergency departments in the United States, such as the quantity of drug-related services provided;
  - (X) the annual national health care costs of drug use, including costs associated with people becoming infected with the human immuno-deficiency virus and other infectious diseases as a result of drug use;
  - (XI) the extent of drug-related crime and criminal activity; and
  - (XII) the contribution of drugs to the underground economy as measured by the retail value of drugs sold in the United States;
- (iv) a determination of the status of drug treatment in the United States, by assessing:
  - (XIII) public and private treatment capacity within each State, including information on the treatment capacity available in relation to the capacity actually used;
  - (XIV) the extent, within each State, to which treatment is available;
  - (XV) the number of drug users the Director estimates could benefit from treatment; and
  - (XVI) the specific factors that restrict the availability of treatment services to those seeking it and proposed administrative or legislative remedies to make treatment available to those individuals; and
- (v) a review of the research agenda of the Counter-Drug Technology Assessment Center to reduce the availability and abuse of drugs.

Data are available for many of the areas listed above; however, there are specific areas for which measurement systems are not yet fully operational. The tables presented in this volume contain the most current drug-related data on the areas the 1998 ONDCP Reauthorization Act requires ONDCP to assess.