

**National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance
Abuse XII – CASA's 2007 Teen Survey
National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse
August 16, 2007**

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JOSEPH CALIFANO, JR.: Good morning. My name is Joseph Califano. I'm the Chairman and President of the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. I have a brief opening statement and some powerpoints, after that I'll take all your questions. When you ask a question, please wait for the microphone and identify your organization since C-Span is covering this and we'd like to get the question on, as well as the answer.

This is the 12th Annual Back to School survey and it continues under the unique effort of the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, CASA, to track the attitudes of teens and those like parents who influence them. Other surveys seek to measure the extent of substance abuse in the population, but the CASA back to school survey probes substance abuse risk.

We seek to identify factors that increase or diminish the likelihood of teen substance abuse. Armed with this knowledge, we believe that parents, teachers and other responsible adults can help our nation's teens grow up drug free. We regard this as a work in progress. We try each year to improve our ability to identify those situations and characteristics that increase or decrease the likelihood that a

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teen will smoke, drink, get drunk, use illegal drugs, or abuse prescription drugs.

For the first time, this year CASA conducted an in-depth survey of the drug situation in our nation's schools. Some of you may remember that a few months ago we issued a report called "Wasting the Best and the Brightest of Our Colleges." That represented three years of work on the college situation. In the course of doing that work we discovered that 75-percent of the college students who use illegal drugs were using them in high school. And 75-percent of the college students who drink heavily in college, were drinking in high school. That got us most interest in really focusing on the high school situation in this country.

The results of this survey reveal that that corridors and classrooms of our nation's and middle and high schools are so infested with drugs that for many students school days have become school daze. This fall, more than 16 million high school students and middle school students will go to schools where drug dealing, possession, drug use, students getting high on drugs, and students getting drunk are commonplace occurrences.

Many of our high schools and middle schools have become marijuana marts and pill palaces. Parents should wake up to the reality that their children are going to school each day

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where drug use, possession and sale are as much a part of the curriculum as math and English. They should take with a grain of salt signs that read "This is a Drug Free School Zone," since most are likely to be political hype.

Eighty-percent of America's high school students, that's about 11 million teens, and 44-percent of America's middle school students, that's about 5 million teens, have personally witnessed on school grounds, on the grounds of their schools illegal drug use, illegal drug dealing, illegal drug possession, students drunk and/or students high on drugs. At least once every week 31-percent of high schoolers and 9-percent of middle schoolers see such conduct at their schools.

States require children to attend middle and high school. It is unconscionable for the responsible state and local officials and school boards to keep our children for an average of six hours a day in such drug infested environments. Think about this. A child has to go to middle school and high school and parents have to send their child to middle school and high school, or else they're violating the law, they're a truant.

Now just suppose we had a situation in which we just had a law in this country that said you must send your teenage child to a building and some grounds at which your child will witness drugs dealt, drugs sold, drugs used and students his

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age, kids his age, high or drunk. It would be unthinkable, unthinkable. This situation has got to change. And for parents who struggle to raise healthy, drug free children countering the influence on their children of drug infested schools is an uphill battle.

This year's unprecedented survey reveals that drug infested schools are far more dangerous than most had appreciated. Sending children to such schools dumps them into a culture where drug use is seen as the norm and into a climate where it's cool, cool to get drunk and drugged. For example, compared to teens at drug free schools, teen at drug infested schools are sixteen times likely to use illegal drugs like PCP or Ecstasy or cocaine, fifteen times likely to abuse prescription drugs, six times likely to get drunk at least once a month, five times likely to use marijuana, and four times likely to smoke cigarettes.

And teens at drug infested schools have quick access to drugs. Compared to teens at drug free schools, those who attend drug infested schools are four times likely to be able to buy marijuana within a day and nearly six times likely to be able to buy marijuana within one hour. At drug infested schools, popularity and drinking and drugging are far likelier to go hand in hand. Compared to teens at drug free schools, teens attending drug infested schools are five and a half times

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likelier to say the popular kids at their school have a reputation for using drugs and three times likely to say the popular kids at their school have a reputation for doing a lot of drinking.

We all know that not all teen impressions are correct, but in this instance the kids are right on the mark because the teens in this survey who said they considered themselves among the most popular kids at their school do, in fact, have higher rates of drunkenness and drug use compared to those who say they are not among the most popular kids at their school. Here again, we see the sinister influence of drug infested schools.

Compared to being popular at a drug free school, teens who attend drug infested schools, the popular ones, are at least ten times likely to abuse prescription drugs, nine times likely to use an illegal drug like PCP or cocaine, what have you, four and a half times likely to smoke pot, almost twice as likely to get drunk in a typical month, and four and a half times likelier to smoke.

This year's effort is the most extensive survey ever to look at the drug situation in the nation's middle and high schools. But for several years we have asked teens one question about this. We asked whether drugs are used, kept or sold at your school. Their response to that question also prompted CASA to take this more in-depth look. We did ask that

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same question this year and the results are troubling. Since 2002, the proportion of students who attend schools where drugs are used, kept or sold has jumped 39-percent for high school kids, and 63-percent for middle schoolers. In the past year alone, from 2006 to 2007, the proportion is up 20-percent for high school students and 35-percent for middle school students.

Those responsible for this appalling situation should be held politically and legally responsible in state and local elections and in the courts for the damage that is being done to children required to attend drug infested schools. In these circumstances, the Federal Drug Free Schools Act alone is like using a teaspoon to drain an ocean. We should recognize that until we rid our children's middle and high schools of drugs, we will never be able to improve academic achievements and test scores, improvements considered essential for our ability to compete in a global economy.

The nineteen expert members of the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Advisory Committee, formed by U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, and authorized under the No Child Left Behind Act, noted this June, just a month or so ago, in its report that and I quote, "Safe and drug free schools are the foundation for improved learning. If students are using drugs or alcohol or are surrounded by others that do, there's a greatly diminished opportunity for them to benefit

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from educational instruction." We couldn't have said it better ourselves.

Let me express my appreciation—or CASA's appreciation—to Steve Wagner, the President of QEV Analytics, who is here today, for his work in analyzing the data. We appreciate the counsel of our expert survey advisory group members, Timothy Johnson, Ph.D., the Director of the Survey Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois in Chicago. Robert Shapiro, Ph.D., Professor of the Department of Political Science at Columbia University and Editor of Public Opinion Quarterly. And Nicholas Zill [misspelled?] Ph.D., a psychologist, and Vice President and Director of the Child and Family Study Area at West STAT. Elizabeth Plenett [misspelled?]], who is also here in the first row, CASA's Director of Special Projects, managed this complex undertaking brilliantly.

Let me just go to these slides, which I think give a real sense of the situation. This is our 12th annual survey. We surveyed a little over one thousand teens, about half boys and half girls, and we surveyed 550 parents. Just over half of those parents were parents of the teens we surveyed. So nationally, a national random sample. We find that about fourteen and a half million teens age 12 to 17 are at moderate or high risk of substance abuse. Now, what do we mean by that?

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Over the past several years we've developed eight indicators of substance abuse risk, which you can see here.

And for example, we used this to determine where to place kids. You can see, for example, 94-percent of the high risk kids have tried alcohol, whereas, only 9-percent of the low risk kids. Ninety-six percent of the high risk kids have close friends who smoke marijuana, only 1-percent of the low risk kids do. Forty-eight percent of the high risk kids say drug use is likely. None of the low risk kids do. The average risk score is one. Anything above one is above average risk and below is below average risk.

This year's in-depth survey. We asked five new questions this year. We asked of each of the teens, "Have you ever actually seen illegal drugs used? Have you actually seen illegal drugs sold? Have you actually seen students, you know of students, who have illegal drugs in their lockers or on themselves? Have you ever seen a student high on drugs or drunk at school?" As I mentioned, eight out of ten of the high schoolers and four out of ten of the middle schoolers have seen one or more of these activities.

As you can see here, about half the students have seen drug possession. Almost half the students have seen students high on drugs. About 30-percent have seen students drunk. Twenty-two percent have seen drug use and 18-percent drug

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dealing. That's tremendous. That's way over 100-percent because there's so much overlap. Forty-four percent of the teens have seen two or more of these occurrences at their school.

And the frequency with which so many of them have seen, it is truly disturbing. At least once a week 31-percent of the high school students, that's four million high school students, and 9-percent of the middle schoolers see drug used or sold, dealt, or students high or drunk. Now as I mentioned, we've been tracking drugs in schools in a very brief way over twelve years and we've asked this question, "Is your school drug free or not drug free?" Meaning, some students keep drugs, use drugs or sell drugs on school grounds. And since 2002, the high schools with drugs are up 39-percent and the middle schools up 63-percent. And as I mentioned before, year to year, high schools with drugs are up 20-percent, and again, middle schools are up 35-percent.

You can see the percentages here of the schools. Thirty-one percent of the middle school students attending schools where drugs are used, kept or sold, 61-percent of the high school students. Which means that the odds are that when you're a kid that's going to high school in this country this September, he's going to a school where drugs are used, kept or

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sold. And similarly, this is the one year difference between 2006 and 2007. Significant increases.

The increase we found in all types of schools. You'll notice that private high schools and private middle schools are less likely to be drug infested than public schools. Nevertheless, even there we see an increase in the percentage of schools where drugs are used, kept or sold. Incidentally, that is consistent with surveys in prior years. We've also known that smaller schools are less likely to be drug infested. You see that here, schools with less than a thousand students. But again, whether the school is smaller or larger, we see this increase in those schools where drugs are used, kept or sold.

Why is it so important? Well, we always knew it was more dangerous for a student to be at a school that was drug infested, but I don't think we fully appreciated how much more dangerous it was. Here you can see that the percentage of teens at a drug infested school many times likelier—I said I think sixteen times likely to use illegal drugs, 6-percent versus less than 1-percent at a drug free school. And right across the board, much likely to abuse prescription drugs, to get drunk in a typical month, to smoke marijuana, to smoke cigarettes, and to drink.

For the last few years we've been asking, if you wanted to buy marijuana right now how fast could you get it? And

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pretty much it's consistent over the last few years, somewhere between about 17 to 20-percent of our 12 to 17 year olds can buy marijuana within an hour, about 20-percent can buy it within a day. But, this year for the first time we can contrasted the availability of marijuana at drug infested schools versus drug free schools and look at the stunning difference.

Kids at a drug infested school, more than half of them, almost six out of ten, can get marijuana within a day and more than a quarter of them, six times as many at a drug free school can buy marijuana within an hour. I mentioned the risk scores earlier, this is just a reflection of the--this is the risk that a kid will become a substance abuser, will smoke, drink or use drugs. And you can see here that kids at drug infested schools are several times, basically almost four times likelier, four times higher risk, at a middle school than a kid at a drug free middle school.

This year we asked several questions about teen popularity because we wanted to get a sense of what's the culture at the school. What do the kids really think about it? We've always asked a lot of surrogate questions because we think they give you a better picture than trying to figure out exactly when you ask a kid, do you smoke? Do you drink? Do you get drunk? Here, we said, at your school, what's the

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reputation of popular kids" And 32-percent of the kids said that the most popular kids at their school had a reputation for drinking a lot, 20-percent said that they had a reputation for using illegal drugs.

Now, we then went on and we said, do you consider yourself among the most popular kids at your school? And those teens who considered themselves among the most popular kids are far likely to use substances than those teens who did not consider themselves to be among the most popular kids. And here you can see across the board the difference, the greater likelihood of drinking, of smoking, of smoking pot, of abusing prescription drugs, or illegal drugs. And then, the most popular kids are also likely to have a lot of friends who smoke, drink and use drugs as you can see here. Again, the difference between the popular and the not popular.

But, again, we see the incredible influence of a school that is infested with drugs. At a drug infested school, 46-percent of the kids, popular kids, are drinking a lot. Thirty-three percent are using illegal drugs. Three times as many are drinking a lot, as at a drug free school and more than five times as many are using illegal drugs at a drug infested school. And here, the difference in substance use among popular teens at drug free schools and drug infested schools. Again, you see phenomenal differences and the danger of having

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your child at a school that is infested with drugs. Much likely to drink in a typical month. Much likely to smoke. Much likely to smoke marijuana, to abuse prescription drugs and to use other illegal drugs.

And then similarly among their friends, the friends of kids, popular kids, at drug infested schools are much likely to be involved with drinking, smoking and marijuana use. We also, this year, as in past years, explored parental attitudes and expectations. And here, we find, as we have in the past, parents of teens in schools where drugs are used, kept or sold, six out of ten believe that the goal of making their child's school drug free is unrealistic. Four out of ten believe it is realistic. Look at how the kids read their parent's body language.

The teen substance abuse risk where the parents think it's unrealistic to have a drug free school is three times that of parents who think they can have a drug free school. Forty-three percent of parents believe it's unrealistic to expect that their teen will never try marijuana, 55-percent is realistic to believe that their teen will never try marijuana. Again, look at the difference, where parents think it's unrealistic to expect their kid not to try marijuana, those kids are twice the risk of substance abuse.

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Forty-one percent of the parents say that it is not very likely that their teen will try drugs in the future. About the same number say it is somewhat likely or very likely that their teen will try drugs. Seventeen percent of parents says their teen's never going to try drugs. And look at that. Where parents say their teen is never going to try it, those kids are at much lower risk than parents who expect their kids to try drugs.

There's a split between parents' concerns and teens' concerns. We've seen this over the years. As you can see, this is an open-ended question. We asked both to teens, "What's your number one concern?" For teens it's drugs. We asked parents, "What's your teen's number one concern?" Its social issues, social pressures, with drugs way down. I would go back and notice something important about this power point. Here, you'll see the decline from 30 to 24-percent in the proportion of teens who say drugs is their number one concern. We are inclined to believe that that reflects the fact that drugs are now so much a part of the teen's life and experience and they so much of them that their concern has gone down.

We asked a couple of questions about media exposure of parents, about three-fourths of the parents say they're concerned about negative influences of movies, TV and music on their kids. About three-fourths of the parents say they take

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steps to limit what their children are exposed to.

Interestingly, the kids of parents who take steps to limit their teen's exposure to media they're concerned about are about half the risk of kids whose parents don't take any steps. And similarly, with respect to the internet, 80-percent of the parents said that they're concerned about potentially negative impact of the internet on their kids. About the same proportion say that they take steps to limit what their children see on the internet.

And again, you'll see that the parents who take some steps to limit their teen's exposure, those teens are at lower risk of substance abuse. We asked parents some question about, "Are they more worried about sex or drunk driving, or shoplifting?" They're more worried about those things than about teen marijuana use. You see 48-percent of the parents were worried about sex. The remaining parents, incidentally, consider either just about as worried about marijuana and sex, or more worried about it than marijuana.

Not surprisingly, 82-percent of parents are concerned if their kids drive drunk. Parents did indicate that they think marijuana use is of greater concern than cheating, hitting another kid, or skipping school. There are other characteristics that we traced year to year, they're fairly consistent. At risk always goes up with age. Academic

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performance. Kids with the higher marks are at lower risk.

Family dinners, we've consistently found since that the more often kids have dinner with their parents the less likely they are to smoke, drink and use drugs.

We'll be putting out on September 20th a special report on family dinners. That's a prelude to September 24th, which is Family Day. Family Day, a day to have dinner with your children is a reminder to parents of how important parental engagement is and how important it is to have dinner with your kids. Sort of analogous to the Great American Smoke Out. It is being proclaimed by over 700 communities and cities, by 49 governors, by the President and lots of churches and celebrations around the country. Parental engagement is very important.

Kids who go to church regularly as consistent over the years are at lower risk. We asked this question. I just put this up not so much to show the difference between teens and parents but, we said to parents, "Do you think drinking is a big part of college for kids?" And 86-percent of the parents said, "Yes, drinking is a big part of college for kids." Then we said, "Do you think your kid will drink a lot in college?" And only 29-percent of the parents said their kid will drink a lot in college, which is another indicator to us of the

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reflection of denial and despair that marks much of parental conduct here.

That's the power slides. I'm happy to take your questions and just please, identify yourself and wait for the microphone. I can't believe I've been so good! Yes, there's one over there.

LAURA AIMSLEY: Hi, my name's Laura Aimsley with Substance Abuse Funding News. And I guess my question is, I'm having a little bit of difficulty understanding this sort of dichotomy between drug infested schools and drug free schools. I was kind of curious how your researchers were able to be comfortable enough to set one against the other because it doesn't really seem to portray the reality.

JOSEPH CALIFANO, JR.: Well, it portrays the reality. If drugs are used, kept or sold. If students are dealing drugs. If students get high and drunk at school, on the school grounds. You see the dramatic difference in the conduct of the kids at those schools. And the drug infested schools are schools where that conduct occurs. There's a dramatic difference in the likelihood that kids will smoke, will drink, will use marijuana. It is a serious, serious problem. Next to parents, schools have the greatest impact on kids. Parents are very important, but schools have the greatest impact. And when kids are going to schools that are drug infested, those kids

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are at much higher risk of themselves smoking, drinking, using
drugs, abusing prescription drugs, getting drunk frequently.

Okay. Thank you all.

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