

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

****Special Edition****

NIH's National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Partners with CESAR to Establish the National Drug Early Warning System (NDEWS)

The Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR) has been awarded a 5-year project to work with NIDA to develop the National Drug Early Warning System (NDEWS), an innovative public health surveillance system that will identify new drugs and drug trends as they emerge. The project will focus on new drugs, such as synthetic cannabinoids (Spice/K2) and designer stimulants (Molly), and changes in the use of more traditional drugs such as heroin. NDEWS will build upon the rich sources of data and network of experts developed by NIDA's successful Community Epidemiology Work Group (CEWG) to identify local emerging drug use trends, and thus facilitate more rapid, informed, and effective public health responses. NDEWS' key activities include:

- Establishing an Advisory Group composed of government officials and leading scientists and practitioners
- Creating a network of scientists, public health experts, law enforcement representatives, CEWG representatives, and others who will become part of a virtual community for sharing information and assisting with local research
- Conducting a national drug scan utilizing both traditional and innovative sources, including social media and web scans
- Monitoring community indicators in 12 Sentinel Sites
- Dispatching a Rapid Response Team to local Hot Spots to study emerging drug use trends
- Publishing and disseminating NDEWS data and information

Dr. Eric Wish, CESAR Director, says "We are excited to have this unique opportunity to work with NIDA to develop a national system to identify and study emerging drugs. NDEWS will draw on an interdisciplinary team of experts from diverse fields, including social science, computer science, public health, emergency medicine, education, and law enforcement. The NDEWS team will provide our Nation with state-of-the-art technologies to enable the continuous collection and analysis of information on drug use across America."

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NDEWS is funded under NIDA Cooperative Agreement DA038360.

CESAR FAX to Be Published Monthly, Effective July 2014

Since 1992, the *CESAR FAX* has been published every Monday, providing a free resource of substance abuse information to more than 6,600 subscribers worldwide. Initially funded by the State of Maryland, the *CESAR FAX* has been supported for the past six years by CESAR. With the initiation of the NDEWS project, CESAR is transitioning the *CESAR FAX* from a weekly to a monthly publication.

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