



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY
Washington, DC 20503

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CONTACT:

ONDCP Public Affairs: 202-395-6618

MediaInquiry@ondcp.eop.gov

Obama Administration Releases Blueprint to Reduce Drug Use and Its Consequences

(Washington, D.C.) - Today, Gil Kerlikowske, Director of National Drug Control Policy released the Administration's *2011 National Drug Control Strategy* in Cincinnati, Ohio. . This *Strategy* coordinates an unprecedented government-wide public health and safety approach to reduce drug use and its consequences in the United States. The Administration's new *Strategy* continues to expand upon a balanced approach to drug control that emphasizes community-based drug prevention, integration of drug treatment into the mainstream health care system, innovations in the criminal justice system to break the cycle of drug use and crime, and international partnerships to disrupt transnational drug trafficking organizations.

For the first time, the *2011 Strategy* outlines specific actions designed to improve the health and safety of three special populations affected by high rates of substance use: active duty military and veterans; college students; and women and their dependent children. Among our veterans, an estimated 375,000 VA patients had a substance use disorder diagnosis in 2007. And according to the most recent survey data of incarcerated veterans from the Department of Justice, around 60 percent of the 140,000 veterans in Federal and state prisons are struggling with a substance use disorder, and 25 percent reported using drugs at the time of offense. Equally concerning is the fact that substance use affects many of the Nation's estimated 75,600 homeless veterans. Additionally, approximately 44 percent of full-time college students, age 18 to 22, reported binge drinking in the past 30 days, and 20 percent reported past-month use of marijuana or other illegal drugs. Women are also using drugs in increasing numbers, but continue to receive treatment less frequently than men, while teenage girls are abusing prescription drugs at higher rates than teenage boys.

"Drug use affects every sector of society that is vital to a strong America, straining our economy, our healthcare and criminal justice systems, and endangering the futures of our young people," said Gil Kerlikowske, White House Director of National Drug Control Policy. "This roadmap to reducing drug use and its consequences will require teamwork and collaboration that draws on the strengths of the prevention, treatment, law enforcement, criminal justice, and recovery communities, as well as parents all across America."

The *Strategy* will also build upon several important legislative milestones achieved over the past year. In August, President Obama signed into law the Fair Sentencing Act. This significant piece of criminal justice reform dramatically reduced a 100-to-1 disparity between the amounts of powder and crack cocaine that trigger mandatory minimum sentences and eliminates the mandatory minimum sentence for simple possession of crack cocaine. It also increases penalties for major drug traffickers. In October, the President signed into law the Secure and Responsible Drug Disposal Act of 2010, which will help communities combat the Nation's prescription drug abuse epidemic by providing states and localities the authority to collect expired, unused, or unneeded prescription drugs. Both of these legislative accomplishments were the result

of support from both Democrats and Republicans, illustrating how combating drug use and its consequences continues to be a non-partisan effort.

Overall drug use in the United States has dropped substantially over the past thirty years. In response to comprehensive efforts to address drug use at the local, state, Federal, and international levels, the rate of Americans using illicit drugs today is roughly half the rate it was in the late 70s. More recently, there has been a 46 percent drop in current cocaine use among young adults (age 18 to 25 years) over the past five years, and a 68 percent drop in the rate of people testing positive for cocaine in the workplace since 2006. To build on this progress and support a public health approach to drug control outlined in the *Strategy*, the Obama Administration has committed over \$10 billion drug education programs and support for expanding access to drug treatment for addicts.

A full copy of the *2011 National Drug Control Strategy* is available [here](#).

Click [here](#) to listen to several audio stories about how drug policy and substance abuse prevention affects the lives of everyday Americans.

For more information on National efforts to reduce drug use and its consequences visit:
www.WhiteHouseDrugPolicy.gov

The Office of National Drug Control Policy seeks to foster healthy individuals and safe communities by effectively leading the Nation's effort to reduce drug use and its consequences.

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