

# DRUGS – WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

By Roger Morgan

Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD) are at the heart of almost all social and economic problems. The cost to our country for substance abuse is horrendous, as indicated below:

**HUMAN COST** - Based on information from CDC, the latest figures indicate approximately 3,600 Americans die each month just from drug overdose. The last time drug related deaths was compiled with overdose deaths was 1995, at which time drug overdose deaths were 27% of the total. If the relationship remains the same today, drugs kill over 142,000 Americans every year; **one every 4 minutes**. American casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq pale in comparison. If this estimate is correct, almost as many Americans die every week than all those who died on the infamous 9/11.

## DRUG-INDUCED AND DRUG RELATED DEATHS IN U.S.

*Death Rates in Bold are CDC Figures. The balance are projections.*

Year	Drug Induced Deaths	% Of Total	Est Total Deaths	Average Annual Increase in Drug Deaths
<b>1995</b>	<b>14,218</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>52,624</b>	
<b>1996</b>	<b>14,843</b>	27%	54,974	<b>104% of 1995 figure</b>
<b>1997</b>	<b>15,973</b>	27%	59,159	<b>108% of 1996 figure</b>
<b>1998</b>	<b>16,926</b>	27%	62,689	<b>106% of 1997 figure</b>
<b>1999</b>	<b>19,102</b>	27%	70,748	<b>113% of 1998 figure</b>
<b>2000</b>	<b>19,698</b>	27%	72,956	<b>103% of 1999 figure</b>
<b>2001</b>	<b>21,683</b>	27%	80,307	<b>110% of 2000 figure</b>
<b>2002</b>	<b>26,040</b>	27%	96,444	<b>120% of 2001 figure</b>
<b>2003</b>	<b>28,723</b>	27%	106,381	<b>110% of 2002 figure</b>
<b>2004</b>	<b>30,711</b>	27%	113,744	<b>107% of 2003 figure</b>
<b>2005</b>	<b>30,397</b>	27%	112,581	<b>99% of 2004 figure</b>
<b>2006</b>	<b>38,396</b>	27%	142,207	<b>126% of 2005 figure</b>

**SOCIAL COST** - 9.4% of all Americans over 12 years old are dependent on alcohol and drugs. Unable to hold a job, drug addicts commit 100 crimes per annum on average. They cause over 80% of the crime in America; challenge the capacity of law enforcement; overrun the capacity of our prisons to incarcerate them; fill our welfare rolls; continue to support the \$400 billion drug trade, much of which goes to support terrorism; and they cause unimaginable pain and suffering not only for family members who love them, but for all of the victims of their actions. 6.1 million children are being raised by grandparents or foster parents.

**ECONOMIC COST** - The cost of illicit drugs alone was estimated at \$293 billion by ONDCP in 2010, increasing at a rate of 5.4% per annum. 99% of that is spent on the painful aftermath that drugs inflict on our society, and only 1% on prevention. This is horrible economic policy.

Those who have died or are addicted have something in common: the vast majority got hooked in high school... 11 to 18 years old according to the experts, average age 13.. **If we want to stop the problem, we have to stop it before it starts, with school age children.**

Non-punitive random student drug testing, the most effective and least costly deterrent for youth (and adults), would cost very little and could literally save hundreds of billions of dollars. It is no longer a choice, but a necessity.