

# NON-PUNITIVE RANDOM STUDENT DRUG TESTING .....

.....*Can Help Win The War On Addiction*

*By Roger Morgan*

**Preventing the onset of alcohol, tobacco and other illicit drug (ATOD) use by children and adolescents is no longer an option; it is a necessity.** The level of death, destruction and economic cost clearly categorizes this domestic tragedy as bigger than all other forms of terror, as indicated below:

**Prevention is the key, and prevention must take place before the problem occurs: with kids.** Thereafter it is not prevention, but treatment and/or wreckage to society. For years, science has indicated that if children reach adulthood prior to first significant use of ATOD they should never have a problem of addiction. It is also a fact that almost all adult addicts contracted their disease as adolescents, between 11 and 17 years old. To prevent the horrible problem substance abuse inflicts on society, we must prevent it from starting with kids.

**Non-punitive random student drug testing (NPRSDT) is the most effective and least costly way to deter drug use, and to identify problems early, so treatment can begin.**

Using on-site urine drug test kits that cost from \$2.50 to \$5 at a ratio of testing 50% of a student body, 1000 kids can be protected for a cost of \$2,500 to \$5000. Actual experience in the 14% of schools in the US who have testing programs indicates the deterrent effect is possible by testing as few as 10% of the students. 50% is recommended, and 100% is even better.

## COST OF NATIONWIDE NON-PUNITIVE RANDOM DRUG TESTING

Figures exclude 850,000 home school students (1999) in all grades 9 through 12

# of Student 7 – 12 grades in U.S.	22,461,500	22,461,500	22,461,500
# of Middle/Junior/High Schools	58,682	58,682	58,682
Average Cost – On Site Urine Test	\$2.50	\$2.50	\$2.50
Percentage Tested	10%	50%	100%
# Kids Tested	2,246,150	11,230,750	22,461,500
Total Cost	\$ 5,615,537	\$28,076,825	\$56,153,750
Ave cost/School	\$ 95	\$ 478	\$ 957

An alternative to testing all kids that would work as well as a deterrent, is a **suspicion based hair testing program for any child that shows cause for concern.** If the student tests positive, they pay the cost of approximately \$59, and agree to follow on testing. Hair analysis has a 90 day window of detection, so it is the best deterrent thus far discovered. This is a way to protect ALL kids, with no cost to the schools.

Given the death rate and economic cost, a federal mandate for this proven prevention techniques would appear justified. However, until and if that happens, the burden of protecting kids, and this nation, falls on the courage and wisdom of State and local Governments, and particularly School Boards and Administrators, to protect children in their domain and help them arrive safely at adulthood by implementing non-punitive random drug testing.

The downstream savings from the wreckage to our society in law enforcement, health costs, welfare, education, mental health and child/family assistance would be measured in billions. If the savings were in part channeled back to schools, we would then be investing in our future rather than paying for social destruction.