

SCIENCE – KEY TO THE SOLUTION

By Roger Morgan

The ONDCP (Office of National Drug Control Policy) and Secretary of Education have recognized the potential for *non-punitive drug screening to both deter drug use, and for early intervention* for those kids who need help. The following facts from the nation's best experts supports this position:

- **If child reaches adulthood before first substantial use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs, they should virtually never have a problem.** (Califano) We know this, and so do those who sell illicit drugs. Thus, kids are in the cross hairs by an evil force more dangerous than all other forms of terror combined. As parents, teachers and politicians, *we have an inherent responsibility to protect children.*
- The vast majority of those dependent on alcohol and other drugs *got hooked between ages 11 and 17.*
- **The single biggest reason kids don't do drugs is fear their parents will find out.** Random drug screening is how they will find out, and thus it gives them a valid reason to "just say no" to peer pressure.
- **Young people are much more susceptible to addiction than adults.** Some drugs are so strong that even one week is sufficient for them to become addicted, so early detection and help is a must. While the death rate because of substance abuse is unthinkable, scores more don't die, they just destroy their lives **often times in eighth grade, or before.** Once addicted, there is only a 10% to 15% chance they will ever fully recover. (CASA)
- **According to CASA, 44% of kids are at low risk; 38% moderate risk; and 18% at high risk of substance abuse.** The family is considered number one as the source of the problem, followed by school environment. (CASA – Malignant Neglect Study)
- Given the state of families in America today, with a 49% divorce rate nationally, single parenting, two parents working, parents who use drugs themselves, abusive parents and good, normal parents who just need help, **schools are the safety net and the extended family.** All kids are at risk, but the 56% of kids that are at moderate to high risk need help. If they have a problem stemming from home, and don't get help from the schools, they probably won't get help period, until it is too late.
- **A person coming from a family with a history of addiction is four times as susceptible to becoming addicted him/herself.** These kids are often the ones who need help, as early as age ten or eleven. And they need it fast. If they don't get constant monitoring and early intervention, they basically destroy their lives and become parasites on society. **Then everyone pays the price.** Some drugs are so strong a susceptible child can become addicted in days or a week. (ONDCP)
- **Availability of drugs increases the risk they will be used.** If drugs are kept, used or sold on campus, students are many times more likely to use. (CASA)
- **Perception of harm** from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs is an important factor as to why young people don't use alcohol, tobacco and other illicit drugs. (ONDCP)
- **The drug journey almost always starts with marijuana use, or legal drugs from an unlocked medicine cabinet.** To reduce the use of other drugs, one must first prevent the onset with pot.

If ever we, as a nation, are to make significant strides in reducing illicit drug use, we must stop the problem where it originates ... *with school age children.* Non-punitive drug testing is not the only tool to this multifaceted problem, but research shows it is the most effective and least expensive way to reduce illicit drug use and to intervene early in the lives of those who will otherwise ruin their lives through dependency.