



Drug Use Hits New Low Among U.S. Workers in 2006, According to Quest Diagnostics' Drug Testing Index(R)

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-- Lowest levels since 1988 --

-- Significant decline in use of amphetamines and marijuana continues trend from previous year --

LYNDHURST, N.J., March 7 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- A continued decline in drug positivity for the amphetamine class of drugs among safety-sensitive workers, coupled with a decrease in positive marijuana drug test results among the general U.S. workforce, drove workplace drug use to a new low in 2006. These were the main findings of the annual Drug Testing Index(R) released today by Quest Diagnostics Incorporated (NYSE: DGX), the nation's leading provider of employment-related drug testing services.

To view the Multimedia News Release, go to:

<http://www.prnewswire.com/mnr/quest/27128>

The 2006 Drug Testing Index showed that positivity for amphetamines (positive test results for amphetamine and methamphetamine as a percent of all tests for the substance) declined 20 percent to hit a new low level among federally mandated, safety-sensitive workers - 0.28 percent, down from 0.35 percent in 2005. Among the general workforce, positivity for amphetamines declined 12.5 percent - from 0.48 percent in 2005 to 0.42 percent in 2006. In addition, the number of positive tests for marijuana, as a percent of the total number of tests for the drug, was down 6.3 percent among the U.S. general workforce compared to 2005 - to 2.38 percent from 2.54 percent. The 2006 Drug Testing Index summarizes the results of more than nine million workplace drug tests performed by Quest Diagnostics between January and December 2006.

Overall, the testing data indicated that drug use by employees and applicants fell to the lowest level since Quest Diagnostics began publishing the Drug Testing Index in 1988. Of all urine workplace drug tests performed by Quest Diagnostics during 2006 for the combined U.S. workforce, 3.8 percent had positive results, compared to 4.1 percent in 2005 and 13.6 percent in 1988.

"We believe this continued decline in workforce drug positivity may be driven by two factors: increased employer vigilance about the impact of workplace drug abuse on liability and the cost of decreased productivity, and the possibility that those who abuse drugs may tend to avoid employment at companies that actively conduct drug testing," said Barry Sample, Ph.D., Director of Science and Technology for Quest Diagnostics' Employer Solutions division.

Data from the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) presented by the Department of Health and Human Services supports the idea that drug testing is a deterrent to employee drug use. The survey found that individuals whose employers do not have a drug testing program reported a nearly 50 percent higher incidence of illicit drug use, in the previous 30 days, compared to those with drug testing programs - 7.1 percent compared to 10.5 percent.(1)

Last year, prompted by strong interest from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, Quest Diagnostics performed a preliminary review of drug-test positives for amphetamines for the first five months in 2006. Those preliminary results were consistent with the annual 2006 findings. Between January and May 2006, drug-test positives for amphetamines among general U.S. workforce employees - totaling 0.43 percent of all drug tests identifying use of amphetamines - declined 10 percent compared to 2005. Among federally mandated, safety-sensitive workers, the positivity rate for amphetamines also was consistent with annual results, declining 20 percent during the same period and tallying 0.28 percent of all drug tests that look for amphetamine use.

Amphetamines belong to a category of drugs known as stimulants, which are used by individuals to increase alertness, relieve fatigue and feel stronger and more decisive.(2) Amphetamines include the drugs amphetamine, dextroamphetamine and methamphetamine, and their variations. Methamphetamine is typically produced clandestinely for illicit use.

Color graphics of the Drug Testing Index, including regional maps that show positivity rates by type of drug, are available on-line at www.questdiagnostics.com to provide more localized workplace drug test data. The Drug Testing Index is released every six months as a service for government, media and industry, and is considered a benchmark for national trends.

About the Drug Testing Index

The Drug Testing Index is published as a public service for government, media and industry and has been considered a benchmark for national trends since its inception in 1988. It examines positivity rates - the proportion of positive results for each drug to all such drug tests performed - among three major testing populations: federally mandated, safety-sensitive workers; the general workforce; and the combined U.S. workforce. Federally mandated, safety-sensitive workers include pilots, bus and truck drivers, and workers in nuclear power plants, for whom routine drug testing is mandated by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

About Quest Diagnostics

Quest Diagnostics is the leading provider of diagnostic testing, information and services that patients and doctors need to make better healthcare decisions. The company offers the broadest access to diagnostic testing services through its national network of laboratories and patient service centers, and provides interpretive consultation through its extensive medical and scientific staff. Quest Diagnostics is a pioneer in developing innovative new diagnostic tests and advanced healthcare information technology solutions that help improve patient care. Additional company information is available at: www.questdiagnostics.com.

The statements in this press release which are not historical facts or information may be forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results and outcomes to be materially different. Certain of these risks and uncertainties may include, but are not limited to, competitive environment, changes in government regulations, changing relationships with customers, payers, suppliers and strategic partners and other factors described in the Quest Diagnostics Incorporated 2006 Form 10-K and subsequent SEC filings.

(1) U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. NATIONAL SURVEY ON DRUG USE AND HEALTH, 2005 [Computer file]. ICPSR04596-v1. Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute [producer], 2006. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter- university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2006- 11-16.

(2) Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, Drug Category Profile: Stimulants, <http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/govpubs/rp0926>

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