



Workplace Drug Use Reversed Decade-Long Decline in 2000, According To Quest Diagnostics' Drug Testing Index

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TETERBORO, N.J., July 31 /PRNewswire/ -- Workplace drug use increased during 2000, reversing a steady, decade-long decline, according to the semi-annual Drug Testing Index released today by Quest Diagnostics Incorporated (NYSE: DGX), the leading provider of employer drug testing services in the United States.

From 1988, when the survey began, through the end of 1999, the annual positivity rate-the proportion of positive test results to all drug tests performed by Quest Diagnostics-declined from 13.6% to 4.6%. However, during 2000, the overall positivity rate increased slightly to 4.7%. All of the increase in positivity occurred in the general U.S. workforce, which excludes federally-mandated, safety-sensitive workers, such as 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. The positivity rate among federally mandated, safety-sensitive workers continued to decline in 2000 to 3.1% from 3.2% in 1999. The positivity rate for the general workforce increased from 4.8% to 4.9%.

"In the 13 years that we have been measuring drug use in the workplace, this is the first time we have seen an increase in the rate of positivity," said R.H. Barry Sample, Ph.D., Director of Science and Technology for Quest Diagnostics' Corporate Health and Wellness division. "This appears to be due to an increase in drug use among current general workforce employees, mainly among employees who are subject to random on-the-job drug testing."

The Drug Testing Index summarizes the results of workplace drug tests performed between January and December, 2000 by Quest Diagnostics. The Drug Testing Index looks at positivity rates among three major testing populations: federally mandated, safety-sensitive workers; the general workforce; and the combined U.S. workforce.

The positivity rate for the general workforce increased even more sharply in three key segments of on-the-job drug testing: "for cause," which indicates reasonable suspicion; "post-accident"; and "random drug testing." For these three categories, the rate of positivity in the general workforce went up 9.1%. In contrast, the rate of positivity for these three categories declined 4.3% for federally-mandated, safety sensitive drug tests.

The incidence of cheating on drug tests declined during 2000, decreasing 52% from 1999, according to the Drug Testing Index. Cheating on drug tests can involve the use of masking agents, or chemicals that are added to drug testing specimens in an attempt to defeat the process of detecting drug use. These agents include oxidizing adulterants, which include nitrites, as well as bleach and pyridinium chlorochromate. Cheating can also involve the use of "substituted" or "invalid" samples.

Color graphics of the Drug Testing Index, including regional maps which show positivity rates by type of drug, are available on-line at <http://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.

Quest Diagnostics is the nation's leading provider of diagnostic testing, information and services with annual revenues of \$3.4 billion in 2000. The company's diagnostic testing yields information that enables health care professionals and consumers to make better decisions to improve health. Quest Diagnostics offers patients and physicians the broadest access to diagnostic testing services through its national network of approximately 30 full-service laboratories, 150 rapid response laboratories and more than 1,300 patient service centers, where specimens are collected. Quest Diagnostics is the leading provider of esoteric testing, including gene-based testing, and is the leader in routine medical testing, drugs of abuse testing, and non-hospital- based anatomic pathology testing. Through partnerships with pharmaceutical, biotechnology and information technology companies, Quest Diagnostics provides support to help speed the development of health care insights and new therapeutics. Additional company information can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.questdiagnostics.com>.

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(Tables follow)

Annual Positivity Rates	Drug Positive Rate
Year	
1988	13.6%
1989	12.7%
1990	11.0%
1991	8.8%
1992	8.8%
1993	8.4%
1994	7.5%
1995	6.7%
1996	5.8%
1997	5.0%
1998	4.8%
1999	4.6%
2000	4.7%

Positivity Rates By Testing Category

Testing Category	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Federally Mandated, Safety-Sensitive Workforce	3.1%	3.2%	3.4%	3.5%	3.6%
General Workforce	4.9%	4.8%	5.0%	5.2%	6.4%
Combined U.S. Workforce	4.7%	4.6%	4.8%	5.0%	5.8%

Positivity Rates By Testing Reason
(For Federally Mandated, Safety Sensitive Workforce)
(More than 800,000 tests from January to December 2000)

Testing Reason	2000	1999	1998	1997
For Cause	14.8%	14.0%	15.3%	14.4%
Periodic	1.1%	1.1%	1.4%	1.9%
Post-Accident	3.9%	3.7%	4.3%	4.3%
Pre-Employment	3.6%	3.7%	3.8%	3.8%
Random	2.4%	2.6%	2.7%	2.9%
Returned to Duty	3.8%	4.4%	4.8%	5.9%

Positivity Rates By Testing Reason
(For General Workforce)
(More than 5.5 million tests from January to December 2000)

Testing Reason	2000	1999	1998	1997
For Cause	25.7%	24.7%	25.3%	26.7%
Periodic	4.4%	4.5%	4.9%	5.2%
Post-Accident	5.9%	5.6%	6.4%	6.8%
Pre-Employment	4.5%	4.5%	4.6%	4.7%
Random	7.7%	6.9%	7.3%	8.3%
Returned to Duty	5.3%	5.5%	7.2%	6.1%

Positivity Rates By Drug Category

(For Federally Mandated, Safety-Sensitive Workforce, as a percentage of all such tests)
(More than 800,000 tests from January to December 2000)

Drug Category	2000	1999	1998	1997
Amphetamines	0.27%	0.26%	0.25%	0.30%
Cocaine	0.64%	0.71%	0.78%	0.73%
Marijuana	1.92%	1.86%	1.87%	2.0%
Opiates	0.25%	0.27%	0.49%	0.53%
PCP	0.06%	0.05%	0.05%	0.04%
Oxidizing Adulterants (incl. Nitrites)	0.10%	0.21%	NA	NA
Substitution	0.03%	0.03%	NA	NA

Positivity Rates By Drug Category

(For General U.S. Workforce, as a percentage of all such tests)
(More than 5.5 million tests from January to December 2000)

Drug Category	2000	1999	1998	1997
Amphetamines	0.25%	0.22%	0.20%	0.26%
Barbiturates	0.38%	0.44%	0.38%	0.35%
Benzodiazepines	0.55%	0.50%	0.55%	0.59%
Cocaine	0.73%	0.80%	0.91%	0.90%
Marijuana	3.29%	3.17%	3.17%	3.4%
Methadone	0.13%	0.08%	0.06%	0.07%
Opiates	0.27%	0.26%	0.50%	0.50%

PCP	0.02%	0.02%	0.01%	0.01%
Propoxyphene	0.36%	0.33%	0.29%	0.27%
Oxidizing Adulterants (incl. Nitrites)	0.10%	0.23%	NA	NA
Substitution	0.03%	0.04%	NA	NA

Positive Results By Drug Category

(For Federally Mandated, Safety-Sensitive Workers, as a percentage of all positives)

(More than 800,000 tests from January to December 2000)

Drug Category	2000	1999	1998	1997
Acid/Base	0.16%	0.46%	--	--
Amphetamines	8.3%	7.7%	7.1%	8.1%
Cocaine	19.6%	21.2%	22.3%	20%
Marijuana	60.2%	56.9%	54.7%	56%
Oxidizing Adulterants (incl. Nitrites)	1.4%	3.1%	0.32%	NA
Opiates	7.8%	8.0%	14%	15%
PCP	1.7%	1.6%	1.6%	1.2%
Substituted	0.77%	0.96%	--	--

Positive Results By Drug Category

(For Combined U.S. Workforce, as a Percentage of All Positives)

(More than 6.5 million tests from January to December 2000)

Drug Category	2000	1999	1998	1997
Acid/Base	0.08%	0.16%	--	--
Amphetamines	5.1%	4.5%	4.0%	4.9%
Barbiturates	3.2%	3.4%	3.0%	3.0%
Benzodiazepines	3.9%	3.1%	3.4%	3.9%
Cocaine	14.4%	16.2%	17.6%	16%
Marijuana	62.8%	62.2%	59.2%	60%
Methadone	0.82%	0.42%	0.36%	0.41%
Methaqualone	0.00%	0.00%	0.0007%	0.0002%
Oxidizing Adulterants (incl. Nitrites)	0.92%	1.7%	0.63%	NA
Opiates	5.4%	5.3%	9.7%	9.4%
PCP	0.56%	0.44%	0.37%	0.34%
Propoxyphene	2.3%	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%
Substituted	0.58%	0.81%	--	--

SOURCE Quest Diagnostics Incorporated

CONTACT: Gary Samuels, Media, +1-201-393-5700, or Cathy Doherty,