



## U.S. Worker Use of Prescription Opiates Climbing, Shows Quest Diagnostics Drug Testing Index(TM)

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### Post-accident tests find opiates up to four times more than pre-employment tests

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More American workers and job applicants are testing positive for prescription opiates, according to U.S. general workforce data in the 2009 annual Drug Testing Index(TM) (DTI) released today by Quest Diagnostics Incorporated (NYSE: DGX), the nation's leading provider of diagnostic testing, information and services. Results from more than 5.5 million urine drug tests reveal an 18 percent jump in opiate positives in the general U.S. workforce in a single year (2008 to 2009), and a more than 40 percent climb from 2005 to 2009.

In addition, 2009 post-accident drug tests found opiates up to four times more often than pre-employment tests (3.7 percent in post-accident as compared to 0.78 percent in pre-employment tests in the case of hydrocodone), suggesting that these drugs may be playing a role in workplace accidents.

"Evidence of increased opiate use is now appearing in the workplace as well as the ER," said Dr. Barry Sample, director of science and technology for Employer Solutions, Quest Diagnostics. "Because more U.S. workers are performing their duties while taking prescription opiates, employers, particularly those with safety-sensitive workers, should note this trend and take appropriate steps to ensure worker and public safety."

The new DTI findings are consistent with a June report from the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), part of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. The DAWN study reported a 111 percent increase in the estimated number of emergency department visits for nonmedical use of opioid analgesics from 2004-2008 (from 144,600 to 305,900), and a 29 percent jump from 2007-2008. The highest numbers of emergency department visits were recorded for oxycodone, hydrocodone and methadone, some of the same drugs showing increased use by the U.S. workforce in Quest Diagnostics' DTI data. Possible opiate side effects include drowsiness, nausea, constipation, and depending upon the drug taken, depressed respiration. They are known for their potential for addiction as well for the euphoria they can induce owing to their effect on regions of the brain that mediate what the body perceives as pleasure.

"The HHS report on nonmedical use of opiates -- and its consistency with DTI findings -- is notable and of concern, but it's important to remember that prescribed pain medication plays an important role in patient care and improved health," said Jon R. Cohen, M.D., senior vice president and chief medical officer, Quest Diagnostics. "Because both prescribed use and misuse of opiates appear to be on the rise, employers will want to address this issue comprehensively as they work to ensure employee health and safety."

Within the opiate category, semi-synthetic opiates showed higher numbers. Hydrocodone -- which, according to a 2010 *Drug Topics* report, has been the most prescribed generic drug for the past three years -- registered a 1.3 percent positivity rate in 2009 general U.S. workforce DTI data. Oxycodones showed a 1.0 percent positivity, while hydromorphone reached 0.82 percent. Naturally occurring opiates, codeine and morphine, were found at far lower positivity rates, 0.21 percent and 0.48 percent, respectively.

### Cocaine and Methamphetamine Positives Continue Declines; Amphetamine Positives Jump Again

Consistent with prior DTI reports highlighting illegal drug use trends, the 2009 index shows that cocaine use continued to decline sharply in 2009 vs. 2008, down 29.3 percent (0.29 percent vs. 0.41 percent, respectively) in the general U.S. workforce, and 25 percent (0.24 percent vs. 0.32 percent, respectively) in federally mandated safety-sensitive (FMSS) workers. While methamphetamine showed little or no change, amphetamine positives continue to climb (greater than 15%) in both general and FMSS workers.

For the full DTI report's charts and tables, please visit [http://www-qa1.qdx.com/employersolutions/dti/2010\\_09/dti\\_index.html](http://www-qa1.qdx.com/employersolutions/dti/2010_09/dti_index.html).

### About the Drug Testing Index(TM) (DTI)

The Quest Diagnostics 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 by Quest Diagnostics - 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 Employer Solutions Business

Quest Diagnostics' Employer Solutions Business offers a comprehensive menu of testing and collection programs to manage employers' pre-employment and employee drug testing, wellness services, national clinical testing, background checks and OSHA requirements. A national leader in drug testing, Quest Diagnostics performed approximately 7 million drug tests in 2009, and leads the industry in drug-testing program options and tools, including urine, oral fluid and hair testing; customized panels; sport-related testing for performance-enhancing drugs; specialized testing of healthcare professionals, and a drug testing program ROI calculator, available online at [www.employersolutions.com/roi](http://www.employersolutions.com/roi). Quest Diagnostics' Blueprint for Wellness ([www.BlueprintforWellness.com](http://www.BlueprintforWellness.com)), a health risk identification solution and education tool for employers, uses laboratory insights to provide measurable results that help participants manage health risk more effectively, in turn reducing healthcare spending and costs.

### About Quest Diagnostics

Quest Diagnostics is the world's 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 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](http://www.questdiagnostics.com).

**Tables Follow**

Percent Testing Positive for "Expanded Opiates" - Urine Drug Tests  
 (For General U.S. Workforce, as a percentage of all tests for  
 "Expanded Opiates")  
 (More than 500 thousand tests from January to December 2009)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Codeine	0.22%	0.20%	0.19%	0.20%	0.21%
Morphine	0.45%	0.37%	0.43%	0.43%	0.48%
Hydrocodone	0.88%	0.97%	1.2%	1.1%	1.3%
Hydromorphone	0.47%	0.54%	0.74%	0.73%	0.82%

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
% Difference Codeine	N/A	-9.1%	-5.0%	5.3%	5.0%
% Difference Morphine	N/A	-17.8%	16.2%	0.0%	11.6%
% Difference Hydrocodone	N/A	10.2%	23.7%	-8.3%	18.2%
% Difference Hydromorphone	N/A	14.9%	37.0%	-1.4%	12.3%

Pre-Employment Positivity Rates for "Expanded Opiates" - Urine Drug Tests  
 (For General U.S. Workforce, as a percentage of all pre-employment  
 tests for "Expanded Opiates")  
 (More than 250 thousand pre-employment tests from January to  
 December 2009)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Codeine	0.22%	0.18%	0.16%	0.19%	0.18%
Morphine	0.33%	0.30%	0.29%	0.31%	0.32%
Hydrocodone	0.69%	0.70%	0.79%	0.78%	0.78%
Hydromorphone	0.37%	0.38%	0.48%	0.50%	0.47%

Post-Accident Positivity Rates for "Expanded Opiates" - Urine Drug Tests  
 (For General U.S. Workforce, as a percentage of all post-accident

tests for "Expanded Opiates")  
 (Approximately 20 thousand post-accident tests from January to  
 December 2009)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Codeine	0.36%	0.31%	0.30%	0.34%	0.46%
Morphine	1.0%	0.90%	1.0%	1.2%	1.2%
Hydrocodone	2.3%	2.1%	2.9%	3.2%	3.7%
Hydromorphone	1.2%	1.2%	1.8%	2.2%	2.3%

Percent Testing Positive for Oxycodones (Oxycodone and/or  
 Oxymorphone) - Urine Drug Tests  
 (For General U.S. Workforce, as a percentage of all tests for Oxycodones)  
 (More than 500 thousand tests from January to December 2009)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Oxycodones	0.56%	0.64%	0.88%	0.83%	1.0%

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
% Difference					
Oxycodones	N/A	14.3%	37.5%	-5.7%	20.5%

Pre-Employment Positivity Rates for Oxycodones (Oxycodone and/or  
 Oxymorphone) - Urine Drug Tests  
 (For General U.S. Workforce, as a percentage of all pre-employment  
 tests for Oxycodones)  
 (More than 250 thousand pre-employment tests from January to  
 December 2009)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Oxycodones	0.41%	0.44%	0.56%	0.56%	0.57%

Post-Accident Positivity Rates for Oxycodones (Oxycodone and/or  
 Oxymorphone) - Urine Drug Tests  
 (For General U.S. Workforce, as a percentage of all post-accident  
 tests for Oxycodones)  
 (Approximately 20 thousand post-accident tests from January to

December 2009)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Oxycodones	1.2%	1.3%	1.6%	1.7%	2.1%

For the full DTI report's charts and tables, please visit [http://www-qa1.qdx.com/employersolutions/dti/2010\\_09/dti\\_index.html](http://www-qa1.qdx.com/employersolutions/dti/2010_09/dti_index.html)

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Quest Diagnostics Contacts:  
Barb Short (Media): 973-520-2800  
Kathleen Valentine (Investors): 973-520-2900

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