



Drug Use Climbed in the U.S. Workforce in the First Half of 2003, Driven by Continued Growth in Use of Amphetamines, According to Quest Diagnostics' Drug Testing Index

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TETERBORO, N.J., Nov. 5 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/- Drug use in the general U.S. workforce climbed in the first half of 2003, driven by continued growth in the use of amphetamines, 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.

The Drug Testing Index summarizes the results of workplace drug tests performed by Quest Diagnostics between January and June 2003. The Drug Testing Index examines positivity rates 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.

For general U.S. workforce employees, the drug positivity rate, which is the proportion of positive test results to all drug tests performed by Quest Diagnostics for this category, increased to 5.0% between January and June 2003, from 4.8% between January and December 2002. At the same time, the incidence of amphetamine positivity increased by 35%, reaching 0.46% of all drug tests that look for amphetamine use among this group of workers. Between January and December 2002 amphetamine positivity was 0.34%.⁽¹⁾

Among federally-mandated, safety-sensitive employees, overall drug positivity remained the same during the same period at 2.5%, an all-time low since 1998. Amphetamine positivity increased slightly to 0.29% between January and June 2003 from 0.28% between January and December 2002.

"Half the increase in drug positivity among general U.S. workforce employees was driven by their growing use of amphetamines," said Barry Sample, Ph.D., Director of Science and Technology for Quest Diagnostics' Corporate Health and Wellness division. "While the Drug Testing Index did detect increases in drug use from other drug classes, these increases were significantly smaller."

Amphetamines belong to a category of drugs known as stimulants, which are used to increase alertness, relieve fatigue and help people feel stronger and more decisive. Stimulants are also used for euphoric effects or to counteract the "down" feeling of tranquilizers or alcohol. Possible side effects of stimulants include increased heart and respiratory rates, elevated blood pressure, dilated pupils and decreased appetite; high doses may cause rapid or irregular heartbeat, loss of coordination or collapse.⁽²⁾

Illegal methamphetamine use and trafficking that began during the last decade is now an epidemic sweeping the nation, according to recently published Congressional testimony, which outlined domestic and international initiatives being implemented to target methamphetamine production and distribution.⁽³⁾ Methamphetamine is a type of amphetamine.

The drug positivity rate for the combined U.S. workforce, which is the number of positive test results compared to the total number of drug tests performed by Quest Diagnostics grew to 4.6% between January and June 2003, compared to 4.4% between January and December 2002. The increase in drug use in the combined U.S. workforce was a reflection of growing amphetamine use among general workforce employees. Quest Diagnostics performed more than 3.4 million workplace drug tests from January to June 2003.

Color graphics of the Drug Testing Index, including regional maps which 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.

Quest Diagnostics Incorporated is the nation's leading provider of diagnostic testing, information and services, providing insights that enable healthcare professionals to make decisions that improve health. The company offers the broadest access to diagnostic testing services in the United States through its national network of laboratories and patient service centers, and provides interpretive consultation through its extensive medical and scientific staff. Quest Diagnostics is the leading provider of esoteric testing, including gene-based medical testing, and also empowers healthcare organizations and clinicians with state-of-the-art connectivity solutions that improve patient care. Additional company information is available at www.questdiagnostics.com.

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- (1) The Drug Testing Index does not differentiate between drug abuse and legitimate drug use.
- (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/rpo926/>.
- (3) Source: DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration), Congressional Testimony, Statement of Rogelio E. Guevara, Chief of Operations, Drug Enforcement Administration Before the House Committee on Government Reform Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources, July 18, 2003.

(For Combined U.S. Workforce)
 (More than 3.4 million tests from January to June 2003)

Year	Drug Positive Rate
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%
2001	4.6%
2002	4.4%
January - June 2003	4.6%

Positivity Rates By Testing Category

Testing Category	January - June 2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Federally Mandated, Safety-Sensitive Workforce	2.5%	2.5%	2.9%	3.1%	3.2%
General U.S. Workforce	5.0%	4.8%	4.9%	4.9%	4.8%
Combined U.S. Workforce	4.6%	4.4%	4.6%	4.7%	4.6%

Positivity Rates By Testing Reason
 (For Federally-Mandated, Safety-Sensitive Workforce)
 (More than 600,000 tests from January to June 2003)

Testing Reason	January - June 2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
For Cause	13.6%	14.3%	14.4%	14.8%	14.0%
Periodic	0.76%	0.95%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%
Post-Accident	3.1%	3.3%	3.6%	3.9%	3.7%
Pre-Employment	3.0%	2.9%	3.4%	3.6%	3.7%
Random	1.9%	1.9%	2.2%	2.4%	2.6%
Returned to Duty	2.7%	3.4%	3.5%	3.8%	4.4%

Positivity Rates By Testing Reason
 (For General U.S. Workforce)
 (More than 2.8 million tests from January to June 2003)

Testing Reason	January - June 2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
For Cause	27.8%	25.9%	26.1%	25.7%	24.7%
Periodic	2.3%	2.7%	3.4%	4.4%	4.5%
Post-Accident	5.7%	5.9%	6.0%	5.9%	5.6%
Pre-Employment	4.2%	4.3%	4.4%	4.5%	4.5%
Random	6.5%	6.5%	7.0%	7.7%	6.9%
Returned to Duty	5.3%	5.6%	5.3%	5.3%	5.5%

Positivity Rates By Drug Category
 (For Federally-Mandated, Safety-Sensitive Workforce, as a percentage of all such tests)
 (More than 600,000 tests from January to June 2003)

Drug Category	January - June 2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Amphetamines	0.29%	0.28%	0.29%	0.27%	0.26%
Cocaine	0.58%	0.56%	0.60%	0.64%	0.71%
Marijuana	1.39%	1.44%	1.72%	1.92%	1.86%
Opiates	0.19%	0.19%	0.26%	0.25%	0.27%
PCP	0.04%	0.04%	0.05%	0.06%	0.05%
Oxidizing Adulterants (incl. Nitrites)	0.04%	0.05%	0.05%	0.10%	0.21%
Substitution	0.06%	0.05%	0.02%	0.03%	0.03%

Positivity Rates By Drug Category

(For General U.S. Workforce, as a percentage of all such tests)

(More than 2.8 million tests from January to June 2003)

Drug Category	January - June 2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Amphetamines	0.46%	0.34%	0.29%	0.25%	0.22%
Barbiturates	0.29%	0.30%	0.34%	0.38%	0.44%
Benzodiazepines	0.60%	0.58%	0.60%	0.55%	0.50%
Cocaine	0.74%	0.71%	0.69%	0.73%	0.80%
Marijuana	3.02%	2.98%	3.17%	3.29%	3.17%
Methadone	0.20%	0.16%	0.13%	0.13%	0.08%
Opiates	0.34%	0.27%	0.29%	0.27%	0.26%
PCP	0.03%	0.02%	0.02%	0.02%	0.02%
Propoxyphene	0.69%	0.73%	0.52%	0.36%	0.33%
Oxidizing Adulterants (incl. Nitrites)	0.02%	0.05%	0.05%	0.10%	0.23%
Substitution	0.03%	0.03%	0.03%	0.03%	0.04%

Positivity Rates By Drug Category

(For Federally-Mandated, Safety-Sensitive Workers, as a Percentage of All Positives)

(More than 600,000 tests from January to June 2003)

Drug Category	January - June 2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Acid/Base	0.38%	0.45%	0.32%	0.16%	0.46%
Amphetamines	11.1%	10.8%	9.6%	8.3%	7.7%
Cocaine	22.0%	21.1%	20.0%	19.6%	21.2%
Marijuana	54.7%	56.0%	58.3%	60.2%	56.9%
Opiates	7.4%	7.3%	8.5%	7.8%	8.0%
Oxidizing Adulterants (incl. Nitrites)	0.65%	0.90%	0.82%	1.4%	3.1%
PCP	1.6%	1.5%	1.7%	1.7%	1.6%
Substituted	2.3%	1.9%	0.77%	0.77%	0.96%

Positivity Rates By Drug Category

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

(More than 2.8 million tests from January to June 2003)

Drug Category	January - June 2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Acid/Base	0.17%	0.25%	0.23%	0.07%	0.14%
Amphetamines	8.5%	6.7%	5.5%	4.8%	4.3%
Barbiturates	2.8%	2.9%	3.2%	3.5%	3.7%
Benzodiazepines	5.2%	5.0%	5.0%	4.2%	3.3%
Cocaine	13.7%	13.9%	13.2%	13.9%	15.8%
Marijuana	55.4%	57.7%	60.9%	63.0%	62.6%

Methadone	1.5%	1.2%	0.98%	0.89%	0.45%
Methaqualone	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Opiates	6.2%	5.3%	5.5%	5.2%	5.1%
Oxidizing Adulterants (incl. Nitrites)	0.22%	0.48%	0.51%	0.88%	1.6%
PCP	0.51%	0.47%	0.46%	0.45%	0.35%
Propoxyphene	5.2%	5.6%	4.0%	2.5%	2.0%
Substituted	0.60%	0.54%	0.48%	0.56%	0.80%

Positivity Rates By Drug Category
(For Combined U.S. Workforce, as a Percentage of All Positives)
(More than 3.4 million tests from January to June 2003)

Drug Category	January - June 2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
Acid/Base	0.19%	0.27%	0.24%	0.08%	0.16%
Amphetamines	8.8%	7.1%	5.9%	5.1%	4.5%
Barbiturates	2.5%	2.6%	2.9%	3.2%	3.4%
Benzodiazepines	4.7%	4.5%	4.5%	3.9%	3.1%
Cocaine	14.5%	14.6%	13.9%	14.4%	16.2%
Marijuana	55.3%	57.6%	60.6%	62.8%	62.2%
Methadone	1.4%	1.1%	0.88%	0.82%	0.42%
Methaqualone	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Opiates	6.3%	5.5%	5.8%	5.4%	5.3%
Oxidizing Adulterants (incl. Nitrites)	0.26%	0.52%	0.54%	0.92%	1.7%
PCP	0.61%	0.58%	0.59%	0.56%	0.44%
Propoxyphene	4.7%	5.1%	3.5%	2.3%	1.8%
Substituted	0.76%	0.68%	0.51%	0.58%	0.81%

SOURCE Quest Diagnostics Incorporated
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